

No 683

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5 Cents.

# SECRET SERVICE.

THE BRADYS' MYSTERIOUS CLEW  
OR THE SECRET OF THE SEVEN  
SEVENS — By A New York Detective  
AND OTHER STORIES

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NEW-YORK.

As the door went open the Bradys saw Alice in the hands of a white-robed band in the hall. A metal cylinder, strung on wire, swung out, touched Old King Brady and he fell unconscious at Harry's feet.





# SECRET SERVICE

## OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 23, 1912.

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# THE BRADYS' MYSTERIOUS CLEW

OR,

## THE SECRET OF THE SEVEN SEVENS

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

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ALL BOOKS MUST BE FIGURED.  
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### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCING THE DUKE OF DOUGLAS STREET.

The story which we are about to narrate is altogether out of the usual. It relates to a case which the world-famous detectives of the Brady Bureau of New York City took up in Chicago.

Curiosity was the beginning of it all, in another sense, for its commencement dates back of the coming of the clew or the taking of the case.

On the last night of the year 19—the Bradys and their accomplished female associate, Alice Montgomery, found themselves in Chicago.

Curiosity prompted them to walk through the streets of the North Side, principally the Milwaukee Avenue district, at midnight, to witness the wild saturnalia which disgraces the big city by the lakeside annually at this time.

Vast multitudes thronged the streets, half mad with liquor and excitement.

Horns were blowing, bugles blowing, brass bands brayed behind the ever opening doors of the beer gardens, and in not a few saloons, while the human voice was raised in every conceivable form.

Singing, yelling, hooting, catcalls and college cries, and wild, meaningless shouts and yells; yes, even raised in prayer, strange as it may seem, that on so cold a night this should take place in the open street.

In wandering up the avenue, the Bradys and Alice came upon a bunch of religious fanatics, both men and women, the men on their knees, ranged in a circle, were praying in honor for Chicago's "wicked mayor," as they styled him—knew, in their eyes, because he did not arbitrarily check scenes of madness.

Horns were blown in their ears, derisive cries and catcalls drowned their prayers, the hats of the men were waved over their eyes, confetti was showered upon them, even upon the women, but still they prayed on.

With the exception of San Francisco, in no other city

in the United States is there anything to compare with a Chicago New Year's Eve.

New York's great White Way, on the same night, is a Quaker meeting alongside of it.

The Bradys and Alice stood for a few moments watching this praying band, at a respectful distance—even they had been more than once showered with confetti—and it was here that they first saw the then notorious character known to all North Chicago as the "Duke of Douglas Street."

Old King Brady himself, with his big, broad-brimmed white hat, his long blue coat, with brass buttons, and the old-fashioned stock and standup collar, cuts a pretty prominent figure on the street, but this man was infinitely more conspicuous.

The wonder was that the Bradys had never happened to see him before.

He was walking in the middle of the street when they first caught sight of him. Nothing strange about that, for to find room to walk on the sidewalk was next to impossible.

"Look at that oddity, Alice!" exclaimed Harry, who first caught sight of him. "Who on earth can he be?"

He was a tall person, something over six feet, and the thinnest man the Bradys had ever seen.

His face was so attenuated that every bone could be traced; his piercing black eyes, resting in deeply sunken sockets, alone dispelled the illusion of a walking corpse.

He wore an old-style Prince Albert coat, tightly buttoned across his narrow chest, the skirt reaching half way to his heels, below which were a pair of spindle shanks encased in tight-fitting trousers of immense black and white checks; yellow spats and low patent leathers completed the ridiculous outfit below, while above it was topped off by a battered old plug hat which looked as if it had been shined up with stove polish.

To all of which add yellow gloves, a flaming red tie, and a red carnation in the lapel of the threadbare coat, and you have the man.



As he walked, he held his hands at his sides, with elbows projecting, and kept turning his head from one side to the other, eying the crowds with an air of owlsh solemnity.

"The Duke of Douglas Street," remarked Old King Brady. "I have seen his picture in the Sunday papers, but this is the first time I ever saw the man himself."

"I have heard of him, now you come to speak of it," said Harry. "Used to be a tailor. He is supposed to be insane, I believe."

"He certainly has every outward evidence of it," replied the old detective.

"He is a brave man, to venture on Milwaukee Avenue, on New Year's Eve," said Alice.

"And yet no one seems to pay much attention to him," replied Old King Brady. "I guess they know him pretty well over here."

Just then the Duke came abreast of the praying band, and stopped to listen.

It was a fatal mistake.

As long as he kept going he was all right; but now he was quickly showered with confetti, and the next he knew a rotten orange took his polished plug, and sent it spinning into the midst of the kneeling fanatics, carrying with it a black wig, whose absence left the Duke's bald head exposed. It was completely bald, and in shape much like a watermelon.

Men hooted, women squealed.

Wild cheers for the Duke of Douglas Street arose.

As for the man himself, he stood there, white and silent, as the yelling crowd pressed about him.

What the result might have been, if Old King Brady had not stepped up beside him, and, displaying his detective's shield, good-naturedly asked that the man might be let alone, it is hard to say.

It was a good-natured crowd, however, and with some remarks about "old white hat," and so on, they went on their way.

The Duke of Douglas Street was an every-day sight to them.

Meanwhile, Harry had recovered the hat and wig, and handed them to the Duke.

"Thank you, young man, thank you," he said. "I—er—should have remained indoors on a night like this, I suppose, but the truth is, the Secret of the Seven Sevens was weighing heavily upon my heart, and my soul yearned for the open. I have been able to solace myself by—er—by the contemplation of this ribald scene. Now I prepare to return to the ducal palace. May I request that you, my preservers, accompany me, and partake of a single glass of certain rare old wine, in honor of this festive occasion? It is from the fourth bin on the left, as you enter my wine cellar, vintage of 1802."

"Mad as they make 'em," thought Old King Brady, but, nevertheless, his curiosity was aroused.

"What do you say, Harry and Alice? Shall we go?" he asked.

Both assented, for they were out for any adventure which might chance to come their way.

"Don't introduce me," said the Duke, as they walked on. "I am an incognito. Ahem! I desire no introductions to any one, and this applies particularly to ladies."

"You see before you a woman hater, Miss, begging your pardon. With all due respect to you, I perfectly despise your sex," said the Duke, turning to Alice.

The Duke then turned away from her, and Alice was completely ignored by him during the remainder of the interview.

But to Old King Brady he said:

"Sir, your face is very familiar to me. Where have we met before?"

"Nowhere, I think," replied the old detective. "Probably you have seen my picture in the papers, same as I have seen yours."

"Ha! Possibly. But I am a noted character. All Chicago honors me. You behold before you the Duke of Douglas Street."

"And I am more than pleased to meet your grace," replied the old detective. "Do you wish me to tell you who I am?"

"No, sir; no. If memory will not serve me, I must go unserved, that is all. We turn here. It is but a short distance to the ducal palace."

It was Douglas Street they now turned into. Here everybody seemed to know the man among the comparatively few people who were abroad.

"Hello, Duke!" they cried. "Happy New Year, Duke!"

And one added:

"Happy New Year to you, too, Old White Hat! Are you the Duke's grandpop?"

To all of this the Duke paid not the slightest attention, but walked on, never altering the peculiar position of his arms, and wagging his head from side to side, which movement, Old King Brady plainly perceived, must be due to St. Vitus's dance.

Presently they came to the oddest sort of a house.

It stood jammed in between two brick factories, the street being principally given over to manufacturing.

Built of wood, it stood four stories high, while its width could not have been more than twelve and a half feet.

The two lower floors had been thrown into one, and were used by a bologna sausage maker, whose sign crossed the front part of the house; but at the side was an exceedingly narrow flight of steps, leading up to one of the third-story windows, which had been transformed into a door.

The Duke, motioning to the detectives to follow him, started up these tall steps.

"What a queer-looking joint!" whispered Harry. "Is it altogether safe to take Alice in here?"

"Oh, I think so," replied Old King Brady. "The man is reputed to be just a harmless crank. I am determined to see the adventure through."

The Duke opened the door with a latchkey and entered. Striking a match, he lighted a lamp which stood on a table in the room into which they passed directly, for there was no hall. The Bradys and Alice followed him in, and he closed and locked the door after them.

And such a room!

It seemed wonderful that so much stuff could be crowded into so small a space.

It was evidently the leavings of a former tailoring business.



On one side were the counters, piled high with bolts of cloth, old and moth-eaten.

On the other side was a long rack, where dozens of coats, vests and trousers hung. There were tables and chairs in the middle, cluttering the whole place. It was almost impossible to get around.

"Be seated," said the Duke. "Sit down on the chairs, on the tables, on the counters, on the floor, if you please, if you can find a place. I will go for the wine."

He passed into another room in the rear, carefully closing the door behind him.

"What a joint!" whispered Harry.

"This smell of mothballs makes me quite faint," said Alice.

"And in spite of that, all this stuff seems to be more or less moth-eaten," said Old King Brady. "But it is terribly close in here. We will cut it as short as possible. But here he comes!"

The Duke reappeared, carrying a bottle and three wine-glasses.

These he placed on one of the tables, and, drawing back, said:

"Memory has served me, old man. If you have seen my phiz in the papers, then so have I seen yours. You are Old King Brady, the detective."

"Right," said the old detective. "That is who I am."

"And permit me again to thank you and this young man for your kindness," said the Duke, and he proceeded to fill the three glasses with a greenish liquid from the bottle. One he handed to Old King Brady, another to Harry, while the third he raised himself.

Alice he entirely ignored.

"What wine is this supposed to be?" asked Old King Brady.

"Green Chablis," replied the Duke. "Vintage of 1802, as I said. Well, here's health and a happy New Year to you, gentlemen."

He turned his back squarely upon Alice as he drank.

The wine proved to be excellent. Harry felt certain that it was the true Green Chablis.

"And now," said the Duke. "I must ask you to leave me, for the Secret of the Seven Sevens deeply oppresses me."

"What is this secret you refer to?" asked Old King Brady. "I have something of a reputation as a solver of mysteries, and possibly I may be able to aid you, Duke."

"No," said the Duke, "not now. Perhaps later. We shall see. Good-night, gentlemen! Good-night! I must beg you to leave me at once."

He flung open the door as he spoke, and of course there was nothing for the Bradys and Alice to do but to walk out.

The door was instantly closed and locked behind them.

"Singular person, that," remarked the old detective, as they descended the steps.

"I should say so," laughed Alice. "I wonder he even allowed me to come into his house."

"It is a wonder," said Harry, "but at least he was very frank about it. His wine was all right, however. It really was the genuine goods."

"It is to be hoped it won't poison us," grunted Old King Brady, who seldom touched wine, and was no judge.

But the wine proved quite harmless, and after taking another turn on Milwaukee Avenue the Bradys and Alice returned to the Sherman House, much amused with their adventure with the notorious Duke of Douglas Street.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SEVEN SEVENS.

The Bradys only thought of their adventure with the Duke of Douglas Street to laugh at it.

But before leaving Chicago Old King Brady, happening to be in conversation with the chief of police, who was also a personal friend, asked him what was known of the history of the man.

"His name," said the chief, "is Lawrence Lawrence. He was formerly a fashionable tailor on State Street, and very well to do. His wife deserted him about ten years ago, and carried off an infant son. From that on the man had been as you see him. He gave up business, and began to dress and conduct himself in this singular fashion. Whether he lost his money or not, I don't know, but he certainly lost his wits. They say he is perfectly harmless. Whatever took him over to the North Side to live, I can't imagine. Certainly the people over there are not his kind, for the Duke comes of old American stock."

"Has he ever been in an asylum?" asked Old King Brady.

The chief did not know.

January passed, and February coming, the Bradys were summoned to Chicago again.

This time it was on a disappearance case.

One Simon Dithlow, a retired multimillionaire, had mysteriously vanished.

He had been missing for several weeks, it seemed, and numerous detectives had been working on the case, but all had failed.

This Dithlow was an eccentric, who, in spite of his great wealth, lived plainly, on Park Avenue, in an ordinary three-story brick house, with no one to look after his wants but a housekeeper.

It was a brother who had taken the matter up.

This man was a broker on the Board of Trade, and immediately after their arrival at Chicago the Bradys presented themselves at his office, leaving Alice behind them, at the hotel.

"There is very little to tell you, Mr. Brady," said the broker. "The whole story is just this. My brother, who is a man about sixty-five, left his home on Park Avenue one morning to come here, where he had a desk. He never reached the office. If he had been suddenly snatched up into the clouds he could not have disappeared more completely. All ordinary methods have been tried in vain to find him. What you can do I am sure I don't know, but as you have been highly recommended to me by the Chief of Police, I wrote you as I did. Spare no expense. Draw on me for what you like. My brother had money in banks to the extent of over a hundred thousand dollars, and I have secured an order from the Surrogate's Court permitting me to draw on this for the expenses incurred in the search."



"What enemies did your brother have, if any?" Old King Brady asked.

"Now that's the point," replied Mr. Dithlow. "In one sense of the word, I don't know that he had any—that is, he had no active enemies, as far as I know; but on the other hand, he was a money lender, has been for some years. Such people always make enemies, of course, and I have no doubt that he had his share of that kind of enemies. He was so reticent and close-mouthed about his business and private affairs, however, that I cannot put you on the track of any of them."

"What about his books and papers? Have they been examined?"

"Thoroughly, by two experts, who report his affairs in excellent shape. He was worth between two and three millions on the day of his disappearance."

"Is that report in writing?"

"It is."

"May I examine a copy of it?"

"I have only the original, but that is at your service."

Mr. Dithlow produced the papers, and placed them in the hands of Old King Brady.

"I will look these over," said the old detective. "Very possibly I may find some hint which may lead to a clew. Is your brother's house open for inspection?"

"Yes. It is just as he left it," replied the broker. "You will find Mrs. Basset, the housekeeper, still in charge there."

Old King Brady and Harry left the broker then and returned to the Sherman House, where the old detective spent several hours examining the affairs of the missing man.

Meanwhile, Harry and Alice went out on other business, and it was not until dinner time that they returned.

"Well, Governor, and what do you make out of the case?" asked Harry.

"I make very little out of it, except that I know now how this man had his money invested."

"Which is how?"

"A million and a half in good Chicago real estate, which yielded him a handsome profit; and something over half a million in the stock of the Manitou Copper Co., at Big Manitou, Lake Superior, which investment was paying him thirty per cent. The rest is in notes, cash and securities of various kinds."

"All of which don't help us much."

"Not as it stands, but I want to know more of this copper business. As you are probably aware, the copper mining interests of America are practically a trust, and have been, and still are, in the hands of a pretty unscrupulous gang. Dithlow was president of the company, and it may have suited somebody's purpose to put him out of the way. It looks the nearest like a lead in the case of anything I have struck. We will have dinner, and then go to this man's house. Thoroughly as it has probably been examined, something worth finding may have been overlooked."

It was after three o'clock when the Bradys and Alice rang the bell of the Park Avenue house.

A maid answered the call, and after showing the de-

tectives into the parlor, summoned Mrs. Basset, the housekeeper.

She was a comfortable-looking woman of about fifty, stout and talkative.

Her tongue ran on unchecked while she told the story of her employer's disappearance, which she had told so many times before, until at last she ceased to speak.

Then Old King Brady began his questioning.

"Mrs. Basset," he said, "did Mr. Dithlow act in any way different that morning from usual?"

"He seemed greatly worried," replied the housekeeper, "and at the breakfast table he was as cross as two sticks."

"Was he usually cross?"

"He often was. He was not a patient man. But I am sure he must have had something preying on his mind when he left the house."

"Try and recall when this mental agitation began, Mrs. Basset. Was he so the night before?"

"No, sir. He was particularly pleasant the night before."

"Then whatever happened to change him must have happened that morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did he receive any letters?"

"Yes, the mail was put at his plate, same as usual. I always put the letters there as soon as the postman handed them in."

"Did you happen to notice the postmarks?"

"No, sir. I never interested myself in Mr. Dithlow's correspondence."

"Were you present when he opened the letters?"

"No, sir; but I came in right afterward, with a dish of ham and eggs. He roared out to take it away, and was I expecting him to live perpetually on ham and eggs? Why, sir, I give you my word, it was a dish he was particularly fond of, and we had not had it in a week."

"Just what was he doing at the time?"

"Well, sir, I happen to remember that he was arranging the sevens."

"Arranging the sevens! What do you mean by that? You haven't mentioned anything about that before."

"Well, if I didn't, sir, it is because I didn't consider it of any account. He had some paper numbers on the tablecloth. Looked as if they might have been cut out of some calendar."

"And they were all sevens?"

"Yes, sir; seven of them. I remember the number because it always struck me as peculiar that there should be seven sevens, and naturally I wondered what they could mean."

"Seven sevens," murmured Old King Brady, and he glanced at Harry and Alice.

Naturally, all thought of the Duke of Douglas Street, and his wild allusion to the "Secret of the Seven Sevens."

"Tell me about these seven sevens, Mrs. Basset," said Old King Brady. "Had Mr. Dithlow received similar figures before?"

"Oh, yes, sir; they often came."

"Came by mail, you mean?"

"Yes, sir. I have seen him take them out of the envelope many a time."



"And letters came with them?"

"No, sir; never. Just the seven sevens."

"Did Mr. Dithlow never give you any explanation of them?"

"No, sir; never. He was very close-mouthed about all his affairs."

"Did it always make Mr. Dithlow cross to receive these seven sevens?"

"Oh, no, sir. I have seen him laugh and chuckle when he received them; that's why I think it must have been something else that made him cross that morning."

"And he went right out after breakfast?"

"Yes, sir."

"Take anything with him?"

"No, sir; only his umbrella, as usual. He always carried an umbrella, rain or shine."

"He said nothing about going away anywhere?"

"Not a word. On the contrary, he ordered me to have a veal kidney for his dinner."

"Did he dine at midday or at night?"

"Always at night. Seven o'clock was his hour."

"But he usually returned earlier than that, I judge."

"Yes, sir. He was seldom out after four."

Old King Brady stopped his questioning there. He resented an order from the broker for Mrs. Basset to place the house at the disposal of the detectives.

Old King Brady having dismissed the housekeeper, went into Mr. Dithlow's library with Henry and Alice, and closed the door.

"Well," he said, "this seems to bring us back to our New Year's Eve adventure. Can it be possible that there is any connection between the Duke of Douglas Street and this Dithlow disappearance?"

"It is certainly a very singular coincidence," said Alice.

"Twice the man mentioned the Secret of the Seven Sevens, you will recollect," continued Old King Brady, "and as he was not so crazy that there was no method in his madness, I am naturally interested. I think I shall look him up before making any other move; but you two had better stay here and go over the house thoroughly. Leave no stone unturned. If you can find some explanation of this seven sevens business for me I shall be greatly pleased."

Old King Brady then left the house, and, hurrying to the North Side, went directly to Douglas Street.

There stood that same queer house.

The sausage factory downstairs was open now, and apparently running full blast.

The old detective ascended the steps and knocked loud and long, but there was no answer.

At length a young man came out of the sausage factory. He was bareheaded, and had a pen in his hand.

"Who do you want, boss?" he asked.

"The man who lives here," said Old King Brady. "The person who calls himself the Duke of Douglas Street."

"He's not there."

"When will he be in?"

"I'm sure I don't know. He has been gone for a month or more."

"Not much more than a month, for I saw him here on New Year's Eve."

"I don't doubt that, for I saw him walking down Milwaukee Avenue on New Year's Day, but I haven't seen him since. You never can tell when he is coming back."

"Oh, he is in the habit of going away, is he?"

"Sure. He is away most of the time, often for weeks together."

"Does he own this house?" asked Old King Brady, beginning to descend the steps.

"Yes, he owns it, and both of these factories, too," replied the clerk of the sausage mill. "He owns lots of other property besides. You might think from the way he dresses that the Duke is a poor man, but it isn't so. He's worth a lot of money."

"You people rent from him, then?"

"Yes."

"Of course he is crazy?"

"Oh, sure he's off," replied the clerk, "but he knows how to do business all right, and don't you forget it. The Duke is not such a fool as he looks."

"One question more, and that's the last," said Old King Brady. "Does he live all alone up there?"

"All alone," replied the clerk. "It's a wonder he isn't robbed, he's away so much. They tell me there's lots of stuff up there. I never was in his rooms myself."

Thus balked, Old King Brady started back for Park Avenue, pondering over the Secret of the Seven Sevens.

It looked as if he had turned up this seemingly mysterious clew only to have it promptly turned down.

But the seven sevens were destined to bob up again, and that in more definite form, as will be shown in the next chapter.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A HINT FROM THE DUKE.

Harry and Alice made nothing out of their search of Mr. Simon Dithlow's house, and Old King Brady, when he looked hold later, was just as unsuccessful.

It was late in the afternoon when they returned to the Sherman House, quite discouraged at their lack of success.

"If we could only have corralled the Duke," sighed Harry.

"It is by no means certain that it would have done us any good if we had," replied Old King Brady. "You must remember that able detectives besides ourselves have been working on this self-same problem, and have been unable to find even a starting clew. Patience! We have but just begun. I am going to look into this man's copper interests to-morrow. I have a very strong idea that the secret we are seeking to learn lies in that direction. However, there is no telling."

That evening Old King Brady looked into the matter of the Big Manitowish Copper Mining Co.

He found that it was a Chicago concern, with offices in The Rookery, on La Salle Street, and there he presented himself the following morning.

He had learned that while Mr. Dithlow was president of the company, the secretary was the active man in the business, being a heavy stockholder, and chairman of the board of directors.

To this gentleman Old King Brady sent in his card.



but Mr. P. Disosaway Doan—such was the secretary's name—declined to see him.

Naturally, this vexed the old detective, and he hurried to the office of the chief of police and told him how the case stood.

"Won't see you, eh?" cried the chief. "Well, say, when my detectives were handling the case he tried to put on frills, too. I must say I didn't like it then, and I like it less now. I'll make him come here and see you, Brady, that's what I'll do. We'll teach the fellow civility, at all events."

Going to the telephone, the chief, after getting Mr. P. Disosaway Doan on the wire, peremptorily ordered him to report at his office at once.

Indeed, so peremptory was the language he used that Old King Brady was half sorry he had applied to him.

He expected a very angry secretary, but he was altogether wrong.

In a very short time an insignificant little man came hustling into the office.

He was not over five feet tall, and of very slight build, with light hair and watery blue eyes.

His principal stock in trade appeared to be a tall hat of the latest style.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "I am exceedingly sorry to have put you to all this trouble, Mr. Brady," he said, after the chief of police had introduced him. "The fact is, I was very busy at the time you called. If my young man was insolent to you, I'm sure I apologize. If there is anything I can do to aid you in finding my good friend, Dithlow, I am really quite at your service."

"I want to know all about his relations with the Big Maniton Company," said the old detective.

"Well, he was president—is still, if he lives—but he did little, except to preside at the annual meeting and to collect his dividends."

"Has he been long connected with the company?"

"Since its organization. It was he who put up the money to buy the mine."

"How much?"

"One hundred thousand dollars."

"Who did he buy it of?"

"A prospector named Joe Nixon, who discovered it, and bought the property from a lumber company which then owned it."

"Where is this man Nixon now?"

"I am sure I don't know."

"Was he paid in cash or in stock?"

"Part cash and part stock," replied the little secretary, growing more and more nervous under Old King Brady's sharp questioning, and perhaps for another reason, which we shall presently explain.

"How much cash did he get?"

"Well, sir, I should have to consult my books."

"I think not."

"Mr. Brady, I—er—"

"Come, come, Mr. Doan, answer my question. You know well enough that Nixon received very little cash. I read my answer in your face. Was it a thousand dollars?"

With manifest reluctance, the secretary admitted that this was just the sum paid the prospector.

It was pure guesswork on Old King Brady's part, however.

He guessed again, with like success.

"The first company went bankrupt, and the property was sold and bought in, was it not?" he asked.

"You seem to be pretty well posted," growled the secretary.

"And at this sale the Nixon interest was wiped out, I suppose?" continued the old detective, following up the advantage he had gained.

"It was," admitted Mr. Doan, looking very uncomfortable.

"Then the long and short of it is that the man only received one thousand where he had a right to expect a hundred times that amount?" continued Old King Brady.

"It was all open and above board, sir," flashed Doan. "All within the law."

"Oh, I don't doubt that. Did Mr. Dithlow engineer this deal?"

"He did."

Now while this conversation was taking place old King Brady had been doing a peculiar thing.

He had gone to the trouble to cut up a calendar that morning, thus providing himself with seven slips of paper upon each of which was the figure seven.

The figures were large, and as the old detective questioned Doan he kept taking out a seven and throwing it carelessly on the table, until now there were seven sevens.

That it made Mr. Doan exceedingly nervous was plain to be seen.

Suddenly Old King Brady took another tack.

"Do you know an eccentric person living over on the North Side, whom people call the Duke of Douglas Street?" he asked.

"I know there is such a person," replied Doan cautiously.

"Has he anything to do with your company?"

"Nothing whatever. Why do you ask?"

"I have my reasons."

"I should like to know the reason why I am subjected to all this questioning," growled Mr. Doan. "One would think that I had something to do with Mr. Dithlow's disappearance."

Old King Brady declined to take this up.

"Just where is this Maniton mine located?" he asked.

"If you have a map of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan I can show you," replied Mr. Doan.

"I have such a map," said the chief, and he produced a large atlas, and found the proper place, whereupon Mr. Doan pointed out the location of the mine.

"Any other active copper properties up there?" asked Old King Brady.

"Yes. There is the Eagle Islet Company, whose mine practically adjoins ours," was the reply.

"I have heard of that company, but I never heard of the Maniton until now. The Eagle Islet is an older and larger concern than yours, I take it?"

"Much larger. It has been working for many years."

"I believe that is all I care to ask you, Mr. Doan," said the old detective carelessly, and he began pushing about the seven sevens.



Mr. Doan arose, and adjusted his plng hat.

"May I ask what you are doing with those slips of paper?" he said.

He had been looking at them all the time; indeed, his eyes had seldom been off of them.

"Studying them," replied Old King Brady bluntly.

"In connection with this case?"

"Yes."

"Do you mind explaining to me just what you mean?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I beg your pardon."

Old King Brady made no reply to this.

"Good-day, Mr. Brady."

"Good-day, Mr. Doan."

The secretary walked out in an evident huff.

"Brady, what in the world are you doing with those figures?" asked the chief. "You had the little man half wild."

Old King Brady explained.

"You certainly mixed him up for fair," said the chief.

"There can be no doubt that the seven sevens have a meaning for that man."

"I think so," replied the old detective, "and I am just as sure that Mr. Dithlow's copper interests are at the bottom of his disappearance. But that don't give us a working clew. That is what we need. However, I don't despair of getting it yet."

He was to get it that night, and in the most mysterious manner.

Somehow, the papers got hold of the fact that the Bradys had taken up the Dithlow disappearance case.

The evening editions, which were on the street by ten o'clock in the morning, published Old King Brady's picture, and some of them had fake interviews with him.

When he reached the hotel the old detective found several reporters waiting for him, and he allowed himself to be interviewed, taking care, however, to express no definite theory about the case.

This made no difference, for later in the day the interviews were published, and in each paper Old King Brady was made to express a different theory.

At all this the old detective was thoroughly disgusted, but as there was no help for it he said but little.

The day passed without any other result than to get a farther insight into the affairs of the Manitou Mining Co.

Its directorate numbered among its list of names the of some of the most unscrupulous of the Chicago trust magnates.

Those of the Eagle Islet Co., on the contrary, were all unknown to Old King Brady.

From what he could learn of this company, he came to the conclusion that it was a very close corporation, and ingeniously managed; but as its offices were in Boston, he found himself unable to gain any very definite information about the concern.

Just as the Bradys and Alice were sitting down to supper a note was placed in the old detective's hands.

On opening it and looking at the signature, he was not a little surprised to find that it read:

"The Duke."

The note was as follows:

"Brady: I see by the papers that you are in Chicago again, and are working on the Dithlow disappearance case. Want a clew? I suppose you do. All detectives want clews. Then, old man, go to my ducal palace and get it. Do not call before midnight, but be prompt at that time. If you want to take your partners with you, I've no objection. You won't find me, but you will find the key under the doormat. Kindly content yourself with looking, and disturb nothing.

"Your friend,

"THE DUKE.

"7—7—7—7—7—7—7."

"Again the Duke of Douglas Street and his seven sevens," said Old King Brady, passing the letter over to Harry, who read it aloud for Alice's benefit.

"You will go, of course?" Harry asked.

"Certainly," replied Old King Brady. "This is a god-send. I have been satisfied from the first that could we solve the Secret of the Seven Sevens all would be plain sailing."

"It may be a trap," said Alice.

"Don't go, if you think so," said Old King Brady quickly. "I am satisfied that it is no trap. I have confidence in the Duke, eccentric though he may be."

"Oh, I'll go," replied Alice.

"I'd just as soon you wouldn't, then," said Harry, who, being practically engaged to Alice, was always on the lookout for her welfare.

But this Alice was pretty apt to resent.

"Now I shall certainly go," she declared.

"I don't think there is the slightest danger," said Old King Brady. "If I did, I should be the last to hear of Alice exposing herself. It is just another of the Duke's eccentricities, that's all."

Old King Brady was greatly elated by the receipt of this letter.

During supper he talked of nothing else, and after the meal was over he retired to his room for a few hours' sleep, so as to be fresh at midnight, Harry and Alice following his example.

Eleven o'clock found them up again and preparing for their trip to the North Side.

Exactly at midnight they ascended the long steps of the ducal palace.

The night was cold and raw, and they met nobody on the way down Douglas Street.

The sausage factory was closed, of course, and the windows above were all dark.

On the occasion of his second visit, Old King Brady had looked particularly at the two factories which the clerk downstairs had told him the Duke owned.

The one on the north was a knitting mill, while that on the south bore several signs indicating light manufacturing.

Evidently some one rented the whole building and let out lofts with power.

Old King Brady felt under the doormat and found the key.

His hopes were raised high as he fitted it in the lock.

It turned readily, and the detective passed into the ducal palace.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MYSTERIOUS CLEW.

The first thing Old King Brady did was to get out his flashlight and search for the lamp which the Duke had lighted on the previous night, which he readily did.

Lighting it, he told Harry to close and lock the door.

The cluttered-up room looked just the same, and smelled as vile as ever.

Everything was thick with dust.

Old King Brady looked for footprints on the carpet, but could see none. There was nothing to indicate that the Duke had recently been in the place.

Passing through to the next room, they found it was a dark bedchamber, with a skylight overhead.

The bed was all crumpled up, and everything in the greatest disorder.

Beyond this was a kitchen, which had also been used as a dining-room.

Here the same disorderly condition prevailed as in the other rooms.

The cook stove was cold and the ash pit was choked with cinders.

The remains of a meal were upon the table, and unwashed dishes, pots and pans cluttered the sink.

Everything indicated that many days must have elapsed since that last meal was cooked.

It was a bitter disappointment to Old King Brady when, after the most careful search, they could discover nothing to indicate the secret presence of the Duke, nor anything which offered the slightest clew to the solution of the mystery of the seven sevens.

"It's just some of his crazy nonsense," said Harry. "There is nothing doing here."

"It begins to look so, I must admit," replied Old King Brady, "yet I dislike to give up."

"Perhaps if we wait a bit there may be something doing," said Alice. "Remember we have to deal with an insane man. We have no right to expect promptness on his part."

"The suggestion is almost the only one which can be made," said the old detective, opening one of the windows at the top.

"We'll stay a while, anyway, and in the meanwhile let us have a breath of fresh air."

They waited until after one o'clock, but there was nothing doing.

"Well, I suppose we shall have to give up," said the old detective, throwing the stump of the cigar he had been smoking into the ash pit of the stove.

He had scarcely risen when from out of the dark room, where there had not been a sound, a deep voice suddenly exclaimed:

"Enter now. The road lies open to your clew."

It took just three strides on Old King Brady's part to gain the open door, and he flashed his electric light into the dark room.

There was no one to be seen, but a change had taken place in the appearance of the room since he had looked in there before.

The bed, instead of being against the wall, as it had been before, was now in the middle of the room, and a nar-

row panel stood open in the south wall of the room, against which the bed had previously stood.

"Somebody has been at work here," observed Alice.

"Surely," said Harry. "There's your road, Governor, but I must say I fear it's a trap."

"You stay here with Alice, Harry. I'll go ahead."

"Not on your life!" said Harry. "We all stick together, that's a sure thing."

"Certainly," added Alice. "Go right ahead, Mr. Brady. Harry and I will follow."

She had scarcely spoken when a faint light appeared through the panel.

"Come, then," said Old King Brady, and he entered, using his flashlight.

There was a short flight of steps here. That they led to the upper loft of the factory on the south of this singular house the old detective plainly saw.

At the top of the steps they came upon a door, which stood open.

Beyond lay the loft, and it was a sight.

Great frames stood around, upon which were stretched huge canvases, with scenes painted on them like those of a theater.

There was a long bench, too, upon which were brushes and paint pots.

Evidently it was the studio of some one who fancied himself a scenic artist, but the work was just a collection of mere daubs.

Indeed, some of the pictures were so abominably bad that it was hard to tell what they were intended to represent.

There were a great many of these scenes, which stood about at all possible angles, but it was difficult to make much out of them on account of the insufficient light.

And this light, such as it was, seemed to be the mysterious part of it, for it proceeded from the eyeless sockets of a huge skull at the extreme end of the loft.

The jaw rested upon the floor, while the top of the skull almost touched the low ceiling.

Of course, it was just another painting, but it seemed to be better executed than those around it. Certainly it looked exactly like a large skull.

For a moment the Bradys and Alice paused, thinking that the voice might speak again, but profound silence reigned.

"It must be that picture of the skull we are expected to examine," observed Alice, at length.

"I fancy so," replied Old King Brady. "Come on."

They walked toward it, and as they drew nearer they saw that there was a picture painted in each eyehole, which were faintly illuminated by the light behind the canvas.

Close up to it they went, and began studying these pictures.

The one in the right eye represented the interior of a large room.

Seven masked forms stood about, ranged in a semicircle. They were completely enveloped in long white robes, even their heads being covered.

There were eyeholes, but no other openings. The head covering came up to a high point at the top, and here, upon each, done in black, was a large figure 7.



Beneath was marked in a bold hand:

"Behold the seven sevens."

In the left eye there was a crudely executed landscape. It represented an old, half ruined church, seemingly built of stone.

Near by was a square structure, which had the appearance of a parsonage, or parish house.

Above the door was a winged globe, with a cross upon it, and above that, within a molding, was the figure 7, seven times repeated, the figures being ranged in a row.

Beneath this picture was scrawled:

"The home of the seven sevens, Snake Islet, Lake Superior."

It took some little time to study all this out, the painting was so badly executed.

At last Old King Brady spoke:

"Friend, whoever you are," he cried, "have you anything further to say to us? I think I understand your clew, and I shall at once proceed to the Manitou Copper Mine. Is such your wish?"

There was no answer.

"Not communicative, it would seem," observed Harry.

"Whoever our unknown friend is, he has made us a very important communication in his own peculiar way," replied Old King Brady quietly. "If there is nothing more to communicate, we will be going."

No answer.

It was not possible to get behind the picture, as it was placed close against the wall, and the lights which illuminated it consequently must have rested in niches.

The detectives now turned away, and started for the door.

Instantly they found themselves in total darkness.

Wheeling about, they saw that the lights in the skull had been extinguished.

They waited for a moment, thinking there might be more to the show, but nothing happened, so Old King Brady, with his electric lamp, lighted the way to the Duke's bed-chamber again.

"The work of a lunatic," observed Harry.

"And consequently you think there is nothing in it," said Old King Brady quickly.

"I don't say that, Governor, but I have my doubts."

"I disagree with you."

"So do I," said Alice. "The Duke never would have gone to all that trouble for nothing."

They went on to the front room, and had scarcely entered when a slight noise was heard in the chamber they had just left.

Old King Brady stepped back into it and flashed his light.

He could see no one, but the panel was closed, and the bed had been replaced.

"Quick work!" he muttered. "But all this don't concern us. Mysterious as the Duke makes this business, I believe he has given us our clew."

They left the diabolical palace then and returned to the hotel.

Even on the ground that he was insane, it was a puzzle to Old King Brady to understand why the Duke should make so much mystery of his disclosure.

The only theory he could advance was that the man himself was one of the white-robed band, and had taken an oath never to reveal its secrets; that he satisfied his conscience with the thought that he had told nothing; but this idea seemed rather far-fetched.

However, Old King Brady stuck to his intention.

First thing next morning, without saying where they were going, the detectives left the hotel.

Feeling that there was a strong probability that they were being shadowed, they simply bought tickets for Milwaukee, and proceeded there.

So far as they could make out, there was no shadowing, but Old King Brady was determined to take no chances.

They went to the Plankinton House, and engaged rooms for two days, paying in advance.

During the day Harry, through a messenger boy, secured tickets for Duluth, and they slipped out of Milwaukee on the night express, reaching Duluth without any reason to believe that any one was on their trail.

The lake they found frozen, and they quickly discovered that the only way of reaching the region where Big Manitou Island was located was by driving sixty miles in an open sleigh.

It was no pleasant prospect, as the snow was deep and the roads bad, but there was no help for it.

The nearest town to the copper mine was Jamesburg, they were informed, which was five miles distant on the mainland, directly opposite Big Manitou Island.

Eagle Islet, they learned, was close by Big Manitou, only a narrow channel separating them.

Inquiry developed the fact that Snake Island was one of the same group, and that on it was an old church and a house which had long been abandoned.

It had formerly been an Indian mission, established by French Catholic fathers, but with the dying off of the Indians had been given up.

This island, the Bradys were further informed, belonged to the Manitou Co., and was used to store copper ore on during the winter, to be shipped to Duluth by water when navigation opened up in the spring.

The Bradys and Alice stayed over in Duluth three days, waiting for the weather to moderate before attempting their long drive, which was finally accomplished with less trouble than they had anticipated.

Reaching Jamesburg, they found the Eagle House a fair hotel, as they had been told, and here they established themselves, registering as Geo. W. Brown, son and daughter.

Old King Brady informed the landlord that they might remain some weeks, having come to that cold climate on account of Alice's health.

That night it snowed, and next day everything was deeply buried.

After breakfast Old King Brady walked down to the shore to have a look at the lake.

It was frozen almost out to the Manitou group of islands, which could be dimly discerned in the distance, and probably beyond, and as seen now it looked like a vast snow-clad plain.

The prospect was discouraging enough.



To make any quick movement upon the islands would only be to betray their intention.

It seemed absolutely necessary to lie back and study the situation.

While he stood thus, Mr. Huggins, the landlord, came from the direction of the barn and joined him.

"Well, sir," he said, "the storm appears to be over at last. Didn't amount to as much as I feared it might."

"Plenty of snow, however," replied Old King Brady, "but that's to be expected. When does your spring open up here?"

"It's late," was the reply. "The snow usually hangs on till the middle of April, but the ice often breaks up considerably before that time."

"What is that group of islands I see out there?"

"Those are the Manitous. They are five miles out. You'd hardly think it, they stand out so plainly."

"Is that where the copper mines are?"

"Yes, sir. The Manitou Company work one and the Eagle Islet concern the other. The latter company's is the biggest. It is on the island you see to the left."

"How deep down are they?"

"Oh, I suppose the Eagle must be down over a thousand feet. That is the oldest. I have no idea how deep the Manitou is. They keep their affairs very close."

"I should greatly like to inspect those mines."

"Well, you won't get the chance, let me tell you. The Eagle is kept closed to every one. Their men live on the island. They use Rushmore, below here, for their market town, and we never see them. The Manitou people use Jamesburg. The superintendent, Mr. Powell, lives here with me, except in rough weather, when he lives up at the mine. If you could get in with him he might take you down, but I doubt it, for it's mighty dangerous."

"Do you happen to know Mr. Dithlow, the president of the Manitou Company?"

"He who disappeared? Sure. I know him well. Mighty strange about him, isn't it?"

"The Chicago papers think so, at all events."

"Yes, I know. Likely he was murdered for what money he had about him. Chicago's got to be a tough town. But, come, Mr. Brown, breakfast is all ready. Better come in and eat before things are spoiled."

"How shall I ever get next to that outfit?" thought Old King Brady, as he followed the landlord into the hotel. "It would seem to be a case of so near and yet so far. As I look upon that dreary scene I can't help wondering which is more of a fanatic, the Duke of Douglas Street or yours truly."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MYSTERY OF SHANT NO. 1.

At the breakfast table, where Harry and Alice joined him, Old King Brady had Mr. Isaac Powell, superintendent of the Manitou Copper Mining Co., pointed out to him by the waiter.

He was a big, red-faced, coarse-looking man, who put away a breakfast big enough for three.

That he was quite as curious about the Bradys as they were about him, was evident from the glances he bestowed upon them.

"A man I should not want to trust," observed Harry.

"I feel impressed the same way," replied the old detective, "but don't look his way again. Above all things, I wish to avoid attracting attention."

Harry could scarcely keep back a smile.

There are times when Old King Brady seems to forget that unless he disguises himself he cannot fail to attract attention, and he had not seen fit to assume a disguise now.

Breakfast over, Mr. Powell got into a handsome cutter, and was driven out on the ice, on his way to the mine.

Shortly after, the Bradys and Alice started out in their own sleigh, and were driven to Rushmore, ten miles away, where they dined at the hotel, and incidentally made inquiries about the Eagle Islet people.

Harry undertook this commission, cultivating the acquaintance of the hotel clerk, while Old King Brady and Alice walked about the town.

There was one shop where Indian curiosities were sold, and as Alice saw a beaded bag in the window which she took a fancy to, they went in.

A half-breed woman waited on them.

Standing near the store was a man, manifestly part Indian, talking with a roughly dressed fellow.

"You don't mean to tell me there's another gone, Bill?" Old King Brady heard the half-breed say.

"That's what there is," replied the white man. "Tim McCormick's missing now, just like the others. He'll never be seen again."

"How does Mr. Harrison take it?"

"He's wild over it. Says he is going to engage a detective."

"He's said that before, and he never did it."

"He swears he will now."

"How did it happen?"

"Oh, Tim left his knife in the winze, and went back to get it, just as we were starting up in the cage at quitting time last night. He didn't come back, and as Jerry got tired of holding the cage he sent me and old man Cole to look him up, saying that he would come down after us. We didn't find him, and up to the time I left this morning, he hadn't been heard from."

"It's terrible," said the half-breed again. "I wouldn't work in No. 1 again for no money."

"Neither will any of the boys, till the mystery is cleared up," replied Bill. "Harrison says no one shall. He put some of the boys in No. 2 and some in No. 3. A few of us were laid off with full pay until he can make a place for us, and I happened to be one of them. That's why I'm loafing to-day."

"It's terrible," repeated the half-breed again. "just terrible. If I was Harrison, I'd close No. 1 altogether. There ain't no doubt what it really is."

"Oh, rats!" replied Bill, with a contemptuous laugh. "You'll never get Harrison to believe your theory."

"It's the legend of my people," said the Indian proudly. "I believe it, I don't care what you may think."

Old King Brady was deeply interested, of course.

He wanted to question the half-breed, who was evidently the storekeeper, but as Bill still hung about, he concluded to come in later, when the man was alone.



"Did you hear what those men said, Alice?" he asked, when they got outside.

"No, I wasn't paying any attention," replied Alice. "What was it?"

Old King Brady told her.

"What do you make out of it?" she asked.

"That Bill works for the Eagle Islet Co.; that the Indian formerly did; that mysterious disappearances have been taking place in shaft No. 1; that he believes Indian spirits are at the bottom of it."

"While you believe that it is the work of the seven evils," said Alice quickly.

"Of course. If this Harrison is superintendent at Eagle Islet, and wants a detective, then now is his chance. I have a good mind to drive over there right now and offer my services."

"It's not a bad idea," said Alice, "but we had better wait and see what Harry has to report."

They saw Harry coming toward them, as they started for the hotel, and he quickly joined them.

"Well, what's the good word?" demanded Old King Brady.

"The name of the superintendent at Eagle Islet is Harrison. He is an Englishman. No outsider is ever allowed on the island."

"Hear anything more?"

"Why, yes. I got a wild story about miners vanishing mysteriously in one of the shafts. There have been five of them who have disappeared during the past two years. Some of the workmen believe that the shaft is haunted by Indian spirits. The clerk laughed at this, but all the same he said that nothing would tempt him to go down in that mine."

"Indeed! And when was the last of those mysterious disappearances?"

"About three months ago."

"Then your hotel clerk is not up to date, Harry, for let me tell you that only last night there was another," and Old King Brady proceeded to tell of the conversation he had overheard.

"Let's hitch up right now and drive out there," he said.

"But they won't allow us on the island!"

"Don't be so sure. According to the man I overheard talking, Superintendent Harrison wants to engage a detective. We can offer our services. Does he live on the island?"

"Yes, with his family, a grown son, who is his assistant, and two daughters."

"I believe we will try it, and we will start right now."

The horse was quickly harnessed, and without mentioning their destination to any one, Harry drove out on to the frozen lake, which he had been informed was perfectly safe far beyond the islands of the Manitou group.

As they drew near Eagle Islet they could see that extensive operations were being carried on there.

There were many houses on the island, mostly little one-story cottages for the workmen.

There was also a large, handsome frame dwelling, which they judged must be the residence of the superintendent.

The works on Big Manitou Island were less extensive, but of a similar character.

As they drew nearer they caught sight of a church steeple among the trees on a smaller island, which lay very close to Eagle Islet, and at the same time at no great distance from Big Manitou, it being between the two.

"There's your church, Governor," said Harry.

"I see," replied Old King Brady, "but it is so hidden by trees that I cannot see whether it bears any resemblance to the Duke's picture or not."

"I don't see the house," added Alice; but then it was impossible to see much, owing to the thick growth of spruce and hemlock with which the island was covered.

But that this was actually Snake Islet, the Bradys could not doubt.

Rounding this, and coming close up to Eagle Islet, a man carrying a rifle over his shoulder came out of one of the buildings, which looked as if it might be an office, and hurried down to the shore.

"To warn us off," said Alice.

"Evidently," replied Old King Brady. "Leave the talking to me."

As they drew nearer, the man, who had now taken a position on the shore, shouted:

"Hey, there! You want to sheer off. No one is allowed on this island."

"I have business with Mr. Harrison," replied Old King Brady.

"What business? You will have to tell it to me."

"I can hardly do that. At least you can hand Mr. Harrison a note from me."

Meanwhile, Harry had kept the horse going.

The man hesitated for a moment, and then roughly ordered him to stop where he was.

"I'll come out to you and get the note," he said. "You are nearer now than is allowed."

Old King Brady hastily enclosed his business card in an envelope, which he addressed to Mr. Harrison, having first scribbled on the back of the card:

"I wish to see you on important business."

Reaching the sleigh, the man began questioning them further.

"Look here," said Old King Brady, "it is useless for you to ask me any more questions. My business is with Mr. Harrison alone."

"Do you mean the old man or his son?"

"The superintendent of this mine is the man I mean. Take him this note, without further talk, if you are wise."

With a growl the man stalked away, saying:

"Don't you come any nearer, now, or there'll be trouble. See?"

"What nonsense!" remarked Harry, after the man had got out of hearing.

"Probably they have their reasons," replied Old King Brady, "but I must confess they might be a little more judicious in their selection of a guard."

The man was gone inside the office only a minute, and when he came on the shore again he began pacing up and down, without speaking.

"Better ask him what the word is, Governor," suggested Harry.



"No," replied the old detective. "Not yet. I fancy Mr. Harrison means to come out here and interview us, when he gets good and ready, and that fellow isn't civil enough to say so."

This proved to be the case.

After a wait of some fifteen minutes the office door opened, and a large man, wearing a heavy bearskin coat and a cap to match, came out and started toward the sleigh.

"My name is Harrison, Mr. Brady," he said. "What is it you wish to see me about?"

"I was told over at Rushmore that you were anxious to engage a detective," replied Old King Brady. "You may possibly have heard of me. I am ready to help you out, if it lies in my power."

"Whoever told you that?" demanded the superintendent.

"I should prefer not to say, further than that I happened to overhear one of your workmen say so. It was not told me direct."

"Did you overhear him say why?"

"Yes."

"Well, I admit that I did make that remark. Yes, I have heard of you, but the trouble is, my orders are strict to admit no strangers on this island. I shall have to put the matter up to the board of directors before I can employ a detective."

"Said board being in Boston, meanwhile you may lose another man."

"That's true enough, if I attempt to work that shaft, but I shan't do it. The matter is most mysterious."

"I am not sure but that I can throw some light on it, however."

"You? How so?"

"That's part of my stock in trade, Mr. Harrison. But look here. I'll make you an offer. I will give my services and those of my partners gratis to you. No need to report to the board of directors unless you wish."

"It's a strong temptation, I will admit, Mr. Brady, but I must know more about you before I can consider your proposition. Whatever brought you to this section? It is a long way out of your beat."

"Business. The Eagle Islet Mining Co. is not the only institution of its kind which has been troubled lately with mysterious disappearances. You are probably aware that your neighbor has recently lost its president in a very mysterious manner."

"Of course. Old Dithlow. A good job, too, the old robber! He ought to have disappeared some years ago, before he swindled poor Joe Nixon out of that rich copper claim. I always said there was good copper on Manitou, and wanted to buy the island when it could have been had for a song; but our old tie-wig directors wouldn't listen. So it slipped through their fingers, and we have had all sorts of trouble since. But to get back. Do you mean that you are up here hunting for Dithlow?"

"Precisely."

"But, man, he disappeared in Chicago! The old fellow was never here but three times in his life!"

"Just the same, we are here looking for him, and incidentally there is no reason on earth why we should not help you solve the mystery of your shaft No. 1."

"Come! I'll go you!" said the superintendent, after pondering for a minute. "If you can solve the mystery of shaft No. 1 you will do me the greatest service imaginable. You see, most of our men are French-Canadian, and almost all have more or less Indian blood in them. There used to be a legend that these islands were haunted by Indian spirits, who carried people off—see? Their name, taken collectively, is the Manitou Islands. That means spirit, or charm, or something of that sort. No. 1 is our richest shaft. It will be simply out of the question to try to work it till this mystery is solved."

"We'll solve it for you, or know the reason why," said the old detective emphatically. "Shall we come ashore right now?"

"Yes; but please keep to yourselves as much as possible. There are those here who will not hesitate to report your coming to the board of directors."

"Let me suggest, Mr. Harrison, that you introduce us as your personal friends."

"I was thinking of the same thing. You come to my house, and that shall be done. Drive on, young man. I will follow you there. By the way, if you happen to run up against my son, don't pay any attention to his manner, but just say you are my friends."

This was said with a troubled air, which made it plain enough to the Bradys and Alice that perfect harmony did not prevail in the house of Harrison.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MORE MYSTERY ON SNAKE ISLET.

Mr. Harrison kept close alongside the sleigh until it reached the shore, where he said carelessly to the man with the rifle:

"These are friends of mine. While they remain on the island they are to go and come as they please."

No answer was made to this, and obeying a sign from the superintendent, Harry drove in the direction of the big house, while Mr. Harrison walked hurriedly to the office.

As they drew near the house the front door opened and a man of about thirty, wearing high knee-boots and a monkey jacket, came out.

He stared in manifest surprise at the sleigh, and then shouted:

"Hey, there! Where in the mischief are you going?"

"You are Mr. Harrison's son?" inquired Old King Brady blandly.

"Yes, I am. Who are you?"

"We are friends of your father's. He will be here in a minute."

"He is coming now," added Harry, looking around.

"It's all right, Will!" shouted the superintendent, as he came hurrying up.

"No, it isn't all right, either!" growled the son. "You know the rules, as well as I do. You'll get the bounce, first thing you know; then we shall all be in the soup."

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Harrison. "I may not be master in my own house, but I am superintendent of the Eagle Islet Co., and what I say goes till I do get the bounce, at all events."



The younger man glared, and stalked off toward the door in silence.

Considering the circumstances, Mr. Harrison handled himself very well.

He called a man, to whom Harry gave up the horse, and then ushered the Bradys and Alice into a neatly furnished parlor, making no allusion to the disagreeable incident.

"What names shall I introduce you under?" he asked.

"Brown, son and daughter," replied Old King Brady.

"I am a widower," added Mr. Harrison. "I live here with my son and two daughters, to whom I will now introduce you."

The young women were summoned, and duly introduced.

Both were civil enough, particularly Maud, the eldest, who appeared to be about twenty-three. Susie, the youngest, who was a very pretty girl, had but little to say.

Maud showed them to their rooms, Old King Brady and Harry being assigned to one in common.

"Now, children," said Old King Brady, "as I have an important matter to discuss with Mr. Harrison, I will leave you for a while."

"We will take good care of them," said Maud, and Mr. Harrison and Old King Brady went downstairs to the sitting-room, where they had a long and earnest talk.

Old King Brady told the superintendent all that had occurred in the Dithlow case, dwelling particularly on the Duke of Douglas Street.

Mr. Harrison seemed greatly perplexed.

"That man has been seen around here, Mr. Brady," he said. "For the past two years he has spent his summers at Jamesburg. Several times I have seen him in a sailboat at night, and twice he has tried to land on this island, and we have had to warn him off. His name is Lawrence. He claims to be an artist. If you had inquired about him at the hotel you would have found that they know him well."

"Did you ever speak with him?" inquired the old detective.

"No, I never have. I understand he seldom speaks to any one. I have been told that he has been in the habit of spending his summers here for several years. He is considered a harmless lunatic by all who know him, but when here he does not dress in the manner you describe."

"About this church and house on Snake Islet. Are there seven sevens over the door of the latter, as I describe?"

"No. There is, however, a peculiar ornament on the door cornice, which is of stone; it certainly does bear some resemblance to the figure seven. I never counted them, but it wouldn't surprise me if it was seven times repeated."

"We must visit the place."

"You will find it difficult. It is not allowed. I am on bad terms with Mr. Powell, the superintendent. I find him a treacherous, overbearing fellow, who has never lost an opportunity to hire away my men and to injure me in any way he can. Only last summer we had an explosion on a small steamer on which we used to ship ore. It sent it to the bottom of the lake with a most valuable cargo. Privately I have always suspected Powell of being at the bottom of it."

"Then you are not even on speaking terms?"

"That's it, and—well, I suppose I must touch on family matters—my youngest daughter, Susie, at one time received attentions from Powell's son, a dissipated, worthless fellow. I ordered her to break with him, and she did so. It has made all sorts of trouble, especially between me and my son, who persists in keeping up an acquaintance with Joe Powell, and sides with his sister against me."

"That is unfortunate."

"Very," replied the superintendent. "We are not a happy household, I'm sorry to say."

"Does Miss Susie ever meet young Powell?" asked Old King Brady.

"Not since the friendship was broken off, to my knowledge."

"How long ago was that?"

"Two years; but do you know, sometimes I have had my doubts. But all this can have nothing to do with our twin mysteries, your seven sevens and my shaft No. 1."

"Don't be too sure of that. I am very glad you told me. Now, as for our visit to Snake Islet, it must be made, and that secretly. My partners and I will undertake it to-night. Do they keep a guard there?"

"Not that I am aware of. The island is used only as a winter ore dump. I don't know why they should. But tell me, Mr. Brady, have you formed any theory in this matter?"

"Frankly, I have."

"And what is it, may I ask?"

"First let me ask you how far under the lake do your drifts run?"

"Our claim extends to Snake Islet, where it adjoins that of the Manitou people. That, I should say, is about four thousand feet. I can't be exact without consulting the survey. We have drifted in on that line about five thousand feet."

"From No. 1?"

"Yes. The drifts of shafts Nos. 2 and 3 run in the opposite direction."

"You are both on the same ore vein?"

"Undoubtedly. As I said before, it was a terrible blunder on the part of our people not buying those islands."

"Well, if you want my theory, Mr. Harrison, your friend Powell is working on your lead privately, and for his own benefit."

Mr. Harrison started.

"Can it be possible?" he exclaimed.

"Did the thought never occur to you?"

"Never; and yet it is possible, of course."

"These men who have mysteriously vanished, were they all good workmen?"

"Each one was the very best in his particular line. This man McCormick was the best drillman I had. I wouldn't have lost his services for anything."

"Can we go down in shaft No. 1?"

"You must, of course; but I don't know how I am going to arrange it. The thing is strictly forbidden, and although I hate to say it, or even think it, I believe my son would report me to the company if I broke the rule."

"Could it not be done secretly? Could you not work the machinery which operates the cage yourself?"

"I would not trust myself to do it, but I will have a



private talk with one of the men whom I feel that I can trust."

"I must see the place where McCormick vanished, that is certain, and I would like to do it before I go to Snake Islet."

"I will see what can be done, and let you know after supper."

"Will you go to Snake Islet with us?"

"No. I prefer not to. It might spoil all if I was to be seen by any of Powell's people. What we want is a complete exposure of this plot, whatever it is. That is the only thing which will save me. I am not strong with the company, Mr. Brady. My son has done all he could to undermine me and secure my position, I feel well assured, much as I dislike to say it."

The conference ended here.

Old King Brady remained in his room until the supper bell rang.

Meanwhile, Harry and Alice made themselves agreeable to the two girls, with whom they got on very well.

Alice is an accomplished performer on the piano, as well as the possessor of a beautiful voice, in which Harry joins her, and much of the time was devoted to music.

Just before supper Will Harrison came into the parlor.

He was fairly civil now, and paid some attention to Alice, but almost completely ignored Harry.

At the supper table none of the three spoke a word to their father.

It was easy to see that their family relations were terribly strained.

Directly after supper Will left the house, and the two girls vanished.

This gave Mr. Harrison his opportunity, and he informed Old King Brady that it would be quite impossible to do anything that night in the matter of the visit to shaft No. 1, but that he hoped to arrange it on the following night.

"Very well," said the old detective. "We will remain quietly here through to-morrow."

"And don't tell me a thing, nor appear to be in the least curious about the mines," added Mr. Harrison. "Will is surely watching every move you make. If you do venture over to Snake Islet to-night, observe the greatest care. I have locked the side door, and here is the key. That door faces the islet. The crust of the snow is so hard that you ought to be able to make the trip without leaving a trail. Remember, we have a night watchman at the mine, and Will, who acts as assistant superintendent, is often there until all hours. Don't think of leaving the house until after you hear him come in and go to bed. His room is next to yours, Mr. Brady."

They remained talking until nine o'clock, when the Bradys and Alice retired to the room of the former to have a little conference before going to bed.

"I suppose you intend going over to Snake Islet to-night?" asked Harry.

"I certainly do," replied the old detective, "and one of us must remain on the watch for young Harrison's return. What do you think of the girls, Alice?"

"It is hard to say," replied Alice. "They were civil

enough, as far as that went, but they are certainly very curious to know why we are here."

"Did they ask you any direct questions?"

"No; but Susie, the youngest, kept hinting at it. Of course, we could only turn it off as best we could. I suppose I am not to go to Snake Islet with you?"

"Not to be thought of," said Old King Brady, so emphatically that Alice said no more, and soon afterward retired.

Old King Brady now laid down on the outside of the bed, and slept until one o'clock, when Harry aroused him.

"Will is in," he said, "and his light has been out for half an hour. I think it is about time for us to get on the move."

"Right," said Old King Brady. "You haven't heard anything of Alice, I suppose?"

"No. Before Will came in the house had been perfectly quiet for a long time. From the way he came upstairs, I am pretty sure he was full."

"Well, we'll start," said Old King Brady, and a few moments later they quietly left the house by the side door.

It was a lovely night, and not nearly as cold as it had been for some days previous.

The crescent moon was just setting in the western sky.

The house stood on a point, but a little way back from the lake, and at the foot of a slight rise was the frozen channel which separated the two islets.

The Bradys made all haste to get to the foot of the hill, where they would be safe from observation by any one who might chance to be on the watch at the buildings connected with the mine, which were on lower ground.

They now struck off across the channel, and were soon at Snake Islet.

Here the snow was not so hard, and they quickly discovered a trail.

"Why, look!" said Harry. "Some one appears to have but just passed this way!"

"That's so," replied the old detective, "and there were two women with them."

"There certainly were. How many sets of footprints do you make it, Governor?"

"Five, including the women. I don't like this."

"Surely it couldn't be that Alice was one of them?"

"Look at those footprints closely, Harry. We know hers well. One set of these certainly looks remarkably like them."

"They do, indeed! What can it mean?"

"Let us push ahead. We shall never solve the problem by standing here."

They followed the footprints among the spruce and hemlock trees, and presently came out at the half ruined old church.

It was precisely like the picture they had seen in the left eye of the skull.

Beyond the church was the house.

It was built of stone, in the Gothic style of church architecture, and a bright light shone through one of the narrow stained-glass windows.

The trail led directly to the door, above which was a carved stone cornice, and there, sure enough, were seven distinct bits of ornamentation, which, although evidently



not intended as such, did bear a strong resemblance to seven sevens.

And now, as the Bradys stood there, taking in all this, and thinking of their mysterious clew, they suddenly heard a woman scream within the house, while at the same instant the door was thrown back and light streamed forth.

As the door swung open the Bradys saw Alice in the hands of a white-robed band in the hall.

A metal cylinder, strung on a wire, swung out, touched Old King Brady, and he fell unconscious at Harry's feet.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A BAD MISTAKE FOR ALICE.

What had happened to Alice?

How came she on Snake Islet, in the early morning, when, as the Bradys supposed, she was peacefully sleeping in her bed?

This must now be shown.

Alice, feeling that her services were not likely to be needed, retired as soon as she entered her room.

It was not long before she fell asleep, and the next she knew she was suddenly awakened by a cold hand which was laid upon her forehead.

Alice was terribly startled, and she sat up in bed on the instant.

The moon, shining in through the window, made the room almost as light as day.

By her bedside stood a tall Indian squaw, with a hideously ugly face, and in her hand she held a revolver.

"Get up," she growled. "Get up and dress yourself. My orders are to shoot you if you cry out or make any fuss!"

"Whose orders?" demanded Alice, striving to be calm.

Instead of replying, the woman backed away a little and gave a low cry.

Alice now perceived that the lower sash of the window was open, instead of the upper, which she had left open for ventilation when she retired.

As the woman uttered the cry a masked form suddenly showed its head at the open window.

The face was entirely covered, except for eyeholes, with white cloth which descended from a sharp point raised high above the forehead.

This gave the head a pyramidal appearance, and in the apex of the pyramid was the figure 7.

It was precisely such a form as Alice had seen in the right eye of the skull of the Duke's mysterious clew.

"I am one of those who issued that order," said the masked person in a low, thrilling voice. "You will do well to obey, young woman. What old Mollie says is true. We respect your privacy. We have brought this woman to assist in your capture, but if you make us any trouble you will quickly find me and two more like me in your room."

"I certainly don't want that," replied Alice, striving to be calm. "I'll dress as quickly as I can."

Thereupon, the masked man ducked down out of sight.

Meanwhile, the squaw stood like a statue, keeping Alice covered with the revolver.

"Where are they taking me?" asked Alice, as she got out of bed.

"Another word, and I fire!" the squaw hissed. "You have had your orders. Obey!"

This seemed final.

Alice dressed as best she could; then, putting on her hat and a heavy cloak which she had provided for her cold trip, she was ready.

The squaw backed to the window.

"She's all ready," she said, without removing her eyes from Alice.

Immediately the masked man bobbed up again.

"Listen," he said. "Outside this window is a ladder, which you will descend with as little noise as possible."

Alice went to the window, Mollie falling in behind her.

The ladder was there, and at its foot stood three of the same white-robed figures.

Their singular gowns reached almost to their feet.

As Alice came down the ladder they closed in about her and one, drawing a revolver, held her covered.

Mollie then came out and, carefully closing the window, descended the ladder, which she picked up and carried away.

The masks did not await her return, but hurried Alice around the house and down on to the ice-bound channel, where they started off in the direction of Snake Islet.

Before they had gone far Mollie joined them.

Reaching the islet they hurried Alice to the house where the Bradys afterward saw her, and the time of her arrival was but a few minutes before the coming of the detectives.

Here one of the masks rapped seven times on the door, which was instantly opened by an exactly similar figure, and Alice was led into a long hall and then into an unfurnished room where a lighted lantern stood on the floor, Mollie still following her.

"Where is he?" asked the mask, who had done the talking.

"He hasn't come up yet," replied the one who had admitted them.

He looked hard at Alice and then picking up the lantern flashed it in her face.

"Holy smoke!" he cried, "this isn't Susie Harrison, you stupid idiots! You've got the wrong girl!"

"We got her out of the room he told us, then!" retorted the spokesman.

"Don't you know Susie Harrison by sight?"

"Well, I s'pose I've seen her, but I never took no special notice of her. Is this the sister, then?"

"Sure not. Who are you, miss?"

"Just a visitor at Mr. Harrison's," replied Alice, quietly. "If I'm not the girl you want, suppose you let me go about my business?"

"That won't do neither," growled the spokesman. "Blamed if I know what to do."

Meanwhile, the squaw had passed into another room and disappeared.

The masks stared at each other and then stepped back and began talking in whispers.

Alice thought she saw her chance.

They had not secured the outer door—she particularly noticed that.

Suddenly she made a dart out into the hall.

No use!



The white-robed figure were upon her like a flash, and this was the time she screamed.

"Some one is out there. I heard them!" cried one of the masks as the others closed about Alice.

He flung open the door and she saw the Bradys.

Then the scene described at the end of the last chapter occurred.

The swinging cylinder was controlled by a handle which one of the masks pulled and as Old King Brady fell the door was instantly closed and Alice was dragged back into the room.

They hurried her on through to another, where there was an open trap-door in the floor.

"Who were those two men, friends of yours?" one demanded.

"Nothing to say," retorted Alice. "Do your work and don't bother me with your talk."

"I reckon you'll be bothered enough before we get through with you, young woman," snarled the spokesman. "Climb down that ladder now."

One of the masks had already gone down the ladder and Alice found him waiting for her at the entrance to a narrow passage, revolver in hand.

The others quickly following, the trap-door was closed.

Meanwhile, Harry had his hands full with Old King Brady, on the outside.

The old detective lay quite unconscious.

Feeling that they were liable to be attacked at any moment, Young King Brady tried to carry him to some safer place.

It proved too much for his strength, however, so he could do no more than to draw his revolver and stand over him, waiting for him to revive.

Fully ten minutes passed before this happened, but long as the wait seemed, Harry was sure he would come back to himself, for after the first few moments he began breathing naturally.

At last he opened his eyes.

"An electric shock," he muttered.

"I supposed so," replied Harry, striving to appear calm.

"Alice!"

"I could not leave you, governor. I just stopped right here."

"Anybody come?"

"No. I have neither seen nor heard any one, but I think some one is coming now. I hear footsteps on the crust of the snow."

"Help me up. I'm weak and dizzy, but I shall soon be all right."

He swayed some as Harry lifted him to his feet and had to steady himself by taking hold of a tree.

"See who that is," he breathed. "There on the left."

Harry was about to advance among the trees when a young man of rather slight build and not unprepossessing appearance stepped into view.

"Who are you?" he demanded, gruffly. "What are you doing on this island? Did you come here to steal ore, or are you spies of the Eagle Islet bunch—which?"

"Neither," replied Harry, quietly. "We are simply friends of Mr. Harrison. We are here to rescue my sister, who has just been abducted from his house."

"What's that?"

"I think you heard. My name is Brown. May I ask yours?"

For an instant the young man hesitated, and then he replied that his name was Powell.

"Son of Mr. Powell, the superintendent of the Marion Mine, probably."

"Yes. What's this yarn you are giving me? What's the matter with the old man? He looks as white as a sheet."

"I have had an electric shock, young man," replied Old King Brady, slowly. "I do not know how much or how little you may know of this business, so for your information I will tell you that the door of this house was flung open a few moments ago and we saw my daughter struggling with four white-robed forms, each with the figure seven over his head. Then a metal cylinder swung out and struck me and I received a shock which floored me. I want my daughter, sir, and I want her quick."

"What weird story is this?" flashed young Powell. "I believe you are simply spies. I——"

"Wait!" flashed Old King Brady, and drawing himself up to his full height, he pulled out his revolver and covered the man, Harry instantly following his example.

"Open that door, Mr. Powell!" he sternly ordered. "Open it, quick!"

"You talk as if you had rights here," growled the fellow. "I advise you to have a care. I can make things hot for you."

"Open the door!"

The old detective thundered the command.

Powell, who looked decidedly frightened, produced a key and hastily unlocked the door.

"The building is vacant," he said. "It has been abandoned for years. Perhaps you can find your daughter inside. You may go through it for all me."

"After you, sir," retorted the old detective, frigidly, and Powell walked in.

"Flashlight, Harry," said Old King Brady, who appeared to be quite himself again.

They passed through four rooms on the lower floor, all of which were dusty and unfurnished.

The trap-door through which Alice had descended the Bradys failed to perceive.

"You can see for yourselves that it is all nonsense," growled Powell. "Where are your white-robed figures? Where is your metal cylinder?"

"What brought you here at this hour of the night, young man?" demanded Old King Brady.

"It's none of your business, but, all the same, I will answer. I begin my day at 3 a. m., which is now the time. I am here to inspect certain ore which is stored in the old church."

"A likely story. Go on upstairs."

He obeyed, sulkily.

Here were six small rooms, all unfurnished.

The plaster had fallen in two of them and through the laths the Bradys could see holes in the roof overhead.

Now, all this time Old King Brady was debating whether or no he should declare himself a detective and arrest the man.

He decided against it, principally on Mr. Harrison's account.

Beside, he felt that probably their chances of rescuing



Alice might be better if they allowed Powell to remain in  
limited security for a time.

Descending the stairs now he said, quietly:

"Mr. Powell, my son's story is the truth. I am going  
back to Mr. Harrison's now. If you are anyway con-  
cerned in this affair I warn you to look for the worst. My  
daughter is very dear to me."

"I know nothing of your daughter," snarled Powell,  
"and I advise you to beware how you venture on Snake  
Islet again."

Old King Brady did not trust himself to reply.

"Come, Harry," he simply said, and they walked away.

"It seems terrible to go this way, leaving Alice behind  
us," said Harry. "Can nothing be done?"

"Certainly, but not now."

"Do you think he suspects we are detectives?"

"Unless we have been betrayed by the Duke in some way  
I can imagine no reason why he should."

"Why not declare ourselves and arrest him?"

"I cannot see it to be the best way, Harry, so drop it,  
please."

They crossed the channel and went back to the house,  
around which Old King Brady led the way.

Now, Alice's room was located on the opposite side of  
the hall from the one the Bradys occupied, and at the other  
end.

Old King Brady was easily able to pick out its window,  
and here he found the mark of the ladder in the snow.

"You see," he said, "they took her out by the window.  
I believe it is all a mistake."

"A mistake! What can you mean?" demanded Harry.

"I believe that fellow is at the bottom of it and that it  
was Susie Harrison he meant to get."

There was a thick growth of trees just behind the house,  
and as the Bradys stood, now, they were facing it.

Suddenly a man passed from the shadow of one tree to  
another.

Both distinctly saw him and instantly both recognized  
the Duke of Douglas street!

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ALICE AND THE INDIAN SQUAW.

Alice was hurried through the passage which appeared to  
have been hewn out of the solid rock.

On both sides, as they passed along, she could see the  
reddish flash of copper.

The passage appeared to have been cut through a solid  
vein of this valuable metal.

At length they came up against an iron door to which  
was attached an electric bell.

This one of the masks pressed and the bell buzzed behind  
the door.

They waited.

"We'll get the mischief," remarked the spokesman, nerv-  
ously.

"That's right," replied another. "He'll be awful mad,  
but under the circumstances I don't know what else we  
could do but to bring the girl down."

After a little footstep were heard and the door was  
opened by Young Powell.

His eyes were dark as his eyes rested upon Alice.

"You stupid idiots!" he shouted. "This isn't the girl  
you were sent after. Who is she, anyway? What does all  
this mean?"

"It means a mistake, Mr. Joe," answered the spokesman.  
"We took this girl from the room you pointed out to us,  
supposing her to be the one you wanted. We were followed  
by two men. Had to knock one of 'em out with the battery.  
As we couldn't stay there and didn't know what else to do,  
why, we brought the girl down here."

Joe Powell scarcely waited for this sentence to be fin-  
ished when he broke out into a torrent of foul abuse.

It seemed a little too much for Alice.

"Look here, sir," she cried, "is it not enough that I have  
been dragged out of my bed and brought to this place with-  
out having to listen to such language? If you make any  
pretence of being a gentleman you will hold your tongue."

"Well, you're a bold one, I must say," sneered Joe—we  
propose to give him the name by which he was known to  
every one at the Manitou Mine. "Who are you, anyhow?  
How came you to be in Susie's bed?"

"I am visiting with my father and brother at Mr. Harri-  
son's. We are friends of his. As to my being in Miss  
Susie's bed, I did not even know it. She did not tell me  
that I was in her room, but now I'm very glad it hap-  
pened. I would sooner be where I am now than to know  
that she had fallen into the hands of one who is so little  
of a gentleman as you appear to be."

Joe bit his lip and actually did look somewhat alarmed.

"Of course, I regret this," he said. "Susie and I are  
engaged. Her father refuses to let me see her and so——"

"And so you tried kidnapping. A narrow escape for  
Susie. I advise you to let me go."

"It is impossible."

"Why?"

"Because you know too much. Was it your father or  
your brother who was knocked out by the electric battery?"

"My father. Will it kill him?"

"I don't know."

"And you don't care. Well, I must say you are a fine  
specimen! What do you propose to do with me, then?"

"You ask me too much. I don't know what the deuce  
to do with you. I wish you were anywhere but here. I  
must have a chance to think."

"And in the meantime where do I come in?"

"Take her to Mollie, boys," said Joe. "Tell her a mis-  
take has been made. Order her to keep the girl close till  
I can turn myself. By the way, what's your name?"

"Find out!" flashed Alice. "I'm not giving out my  
name to such as you."

The masks led her away through the other passage and  
presently they came to a wooden door closely fitted in a  
niche in the rock, upon which the mask who had done most  
of the talking knocked.

"What do you want?" snarled the voice of the old  
squaw. "I'm in bed and asleep."

"Listen, Mollie," replied the mask, "it was all a mis-  
take. We captured the wrong girl. Mr. Joe says you must  
look out for her till he has time to decide what to do with  
her."

"The wrong girl!" screamed Mollie. "How can she be  
the wrong one when we got her out of the room he said?"



"She is, all the same. Will you get up and open the door?"

"No, I won't while you fellows are standing there. Of course I won't."

"We'll stand back. No use kicking, Mollie. You've got to take her in. Them's orders."

"Orders be blamed!" snarled the squaw, but she did open the door after she heard them move away.

The place which Alice now entered was just a hole in the wall where there was a cot bed, a table, a chair, and a few other things.

Mollie had lighted a lamp and as she locked the door she held it up before Alice's face and stared at her, fixedly.

"What's the matter with the man?" she presently growled. "Hain't you good-looking enough to suit him? I see now you are not the right girl, but you do look like her—better-looking, I say. I'm going back to bed. You can sit in that chair till morning, or stand up or lie on the floor, just as you blame please. I don't give up my bed to no one."

"I don't want your bed, Millie," said Alice, quietly. "The chair will do me."

Mollie got into bed again and for some time remained silent, with her eyes closed.

At last she opened them again and snarled:

"Oh, blame it all, I can't sleep with you a-settin' there. Say something, can't you?"

"What do you want me to say?" demanded Alice, wishing that she might have been left to herself.

"Say what you like—something, anything, only talk!"

"This woman is sorry for what she has done and is wishing that she hadn't got me into this trouble," thought Alice. "That's what's the matter with her."

She immediately began talking in a natural way with the squaw.

"What do you do down here," she asked, "cook?"

"That's it," replied Mollie, "and a mean life it is. I wish I was out of it. Of course, in the winter-time it isn't so bad, but in summer, well, say, who wants to be locked in underground in hot weather, a-sizzling and a-biling over a fire? I'll stay the winter out, but when springtime comes I'm going to take to the woods, first time they let me up."

"You don't get up very often, then?"

"No; sometimes it's as much as a whole month."

"Of course, they pay you well or you wouldn't stand it."

"Well, they do, you bet. I s'pose now you're a-wondering what's going on down here?"

"Naturally."

"Well, I'll never tell you. I swore I wouldn't, and when an Indian swears to a thing he always keeps his word, and we women are no different from the men. It's too bad that mistake was made. The girl is dead in love with Mr. Joe, and once he got her here 'twould have been all right. I'm wondering, though, whatever he means to do with you?"

"Mollie, is he bad enough to kill me?" asked Alice, sitting up.

"I'm afraid he is, miss. Oh, he's a bad one! I know that. So are they all. A crooked bunch, miss. I know them. Should say I ought. I've been seeking for them two

years and, say, I've laid up four hundred dollars and a little over. If it was five hundred I know what I'd do."

"What?"

"Slope, and never see this blamed hole again."

"Could you get out without any one knowing it?"

"Could I? Why, of course I could. They think they know all about this old working, but they only know part. Why, people took copper from here thousands of years ago to make their knives and tomahawks of. We Indians don't tell all we know to white men, you bet. Yes, if I had five hundred dollars I'd go to Chicago and live with my step-on. He's often asked me to do it, but I won't be beholden to him for money. I reckon five hundred would keep me in what little I want till I die."

"Is your stepson a married man? Could you get along with his wife?"

"He was married, but his wife ran away," she said. "He hates women now. No, he lives all by himself. He's an artist. He paints beautiful pictures. You'd jest order see them. He's a tailor, too, but he don't work at that now for, you see, he's got money enough to live on. Folks call him crazy, but 'tain't so. Jest his way. Oh, he'd be good to me, all right. He's asked me many a time to come down to Chicago and keep house for him, but I hate to leave the woods; all the same, I see blame litle of them as it is."

"Can this woman be talking about the Duke of Douglas Street?" Alice herself. "It all seems to fit."

She was determined to know.

Alice began to think she saw her chance.

"Tell me, Mollie," she said, "is your step-on an Indian?"

"Indeed he isn't," chuckled the squaw. "He's as white as you are. It came about this way: Years ago, when I was a gal, there came an awful hard winter. I was living in northern Wisconsin then and one night there wandered into our camp a white man, with a little baby boy in his arms, both almost frozen. He was a fur hunter, and his wife died that morning. The hut they lived in took fire and the poor soul was burned to death. It's a thing I don't like to think about, so I won't say no more, except that the man stayed on till spring and I nursed the baby for him. Well, when spring came I up and married him and we went to live by ourselves in this very neighborhood. It was all wild country then, with no white people into it except the Jesuit Fathers of the Mission, who lived in the house above us. Lawrence, he put the boy in their charge and he was brung up right here and got a fine eddication. When the mission broke up he went to Milwaukee and learned the tailoring business, but he never forgot his old Indian mammy and almost every summer he comes up to see me."

"It's the Duke, all right," thought Alice. "It must have been he who revealed the secrets of this place to these people. He is one of the seven sevens."

"Mollie," she said aloud, "I am going to Chicago in a few days if I can only escape these people. I tell you what I'll do for you. Get me out of here to-night and I'll give you a hundred dollars and you shall go to Chicago with me, with your five hundred made up."

"Do you know," replied Mollie, "I was thinking of that very thing and wondering if you would do that much for me if I helped you out of this snap. You're a mighty good-looking gal. Them fellers will never let you go out of this."



"I know them. Nothing but trouble can come of you being here. I could get you cut if I wanted to, all right."

"Do it," urged Alice.

"Get the money with you?"

"No; but I can get it from my father, who is staying at Mr. Harrison's. Is there any reason why we shouldn't go right now?"

"Wonder if Mr. Harrison would take care of me till we could start?"

"I'm sure he would."

"Blamed if I don't risk it. Duuno whether they are holding a meeting to-night or not, but I hardly think it. I'll get up and dress. It's a blame shame to leave you to take your chances here."

She got up and began to dress then.

"Now, don't expect me to give away none of their secrets," she said, "because I hain't a-goin' to do it. All I agree to do is to get you out of here if I can."

"I understand," replied Alice. "You shall have it all your own way, Mollie, if you'll only lend me a helping hand."

The squaw was quickly dressed and then opening the door she peered out into the passage.

"No one there," she whispered. "All the same, they may be in the meeting-room for all I can tell. If they are, we shall have to wait. Now, come."

She picked up the lamp, but Alice, producing her electric flashlight and showing Mollie how it was used, the squaw at once decided that it was the very thing, and the lamp was left behind.

Hurrying on, they came to the end of the passage across which was a heavy wooden door.

Behind this voices could be heard.

Mollie put her finger to her lips. "It is as I was afraid," she said. "They are holding a meeting. We shall have to go another way. Follow me."

Returning along the passage for a short distance she presently paused and pointing to an opening close down to the ground in the left-hand wall, whispered:

"I'm going to crawl through there, miss, and you want to follow me."

Alice nodded and, following the woman, crawled for several yards on her hands and knees, coming then into a large cavern which extended off into the darkness further than the eye could reach.

Ahead of them on their right a bright light shone and to this Mollie pointed.

"Look here," she said, "you are a woman, and all women are curious. Don't tell me you don't want to know what those fellows are up to, for you do. Come along and you shall see them and hear their talk. That won't be like giving away their secrets. Once I'm out of here I don't care who knows, but I don't want to break my word."

Smiling at this queer reasoning, Alice followed Mollie towards the light.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ONE MORE THE DUKE.

"The Duke!" breathed Harry.

"I see him," said Old King Brady.

"Shall we go for him? Whatever can he be doing here?"

"Watching us, evidently. Let's wait and see what he will do."

They waited, but he did nothing.

Old King Brady grew impatient.

"Plague take the fellow," he growled, "I don't propose to stand here the rest of the night. Come on, Harry, and we'll interview him if he is still there."

But they had been too long in getting around to it.

When they looked behind the tree the Duke had vanished.

Old King Brady flashed his light and found his trail in the snow, which was softer here under the trees.

It led them across the point upon which Mr. Harrison's house stood and looking off on the lake they saw the Duke running in the direction of Snake Islet.

"Come, I don't like this," growled Old King Brady. "Looks as if the man was a part of the outfit himself."

"I don't doubt it," replied Harry. "All the same, he may be working against them. He couldn't play his cards in anything but a crazy fashion if he tried."

"That's so, too. Well, we shall have to let him go his way. I'm not chasing him, that's one sure thing."

"Remember what he said, governor. That the secret of the Seven Sevens was weighing on his conscience, or words to that effect. I have confidence in the Duke."

"He's crazy," growled the old detective. "and a man who is crazy is a poor one to tie to, I say. But come, let's get back to the house."

Naturally, they followed the Duke's trail, and when they came to the tree behind which he had dodged, Harry caught sight of something white which was pinned to it.

This proved to be a folded paper made fast to the tree by driving the blade of a small penknife through it.

Old King Brady took it down, and while Harry held the light he read as follows:

"BRADY:—Here I am on the job. Don't worry about the woman. Why in thunder didn't you leave her in Chicago? Women are a nuisance. They always spoil the pie. However, in this case, her capture was a mistake. The Seven Sevens don't suspect you, and I think I can get the woman away from them. At all events, I shall do my best. Tomorrow night, at midnight, you want to be in No. 1. Have Harrison with you, and if my plans pan out as I hope the secret of the Seven Sevens shall be revealed. DUKE."

"That sounds good to me," said Old King Brady. "Harry, I guess you are right after all."

"And you were right about Alice's capture being a mistake. I suppose we shall have to lie quiet on the strength of this letter."

"We'll think it over and decide in the morning," replied the old detective. "At least we can do nothing now."

They let themselves in and returned to their room, first listening at the door of Will Harrison's room, behind which they could hear a loud snoring.

"He's dead to the world, all right," whispered Old King Brady, when they got safely into their room. "I didn't know but what he might have dodged out again, for I strongly suspect that he is one of the Seven Sevens."

They lay down on the outside of the bed and the old detective managed to get a little sleep, but poor Harry never closed his eyes.



At daybreak they arose and went downstairs, to find Mr. Harrison already up and eating a cold breakfast.

"I always eat my breakfast alone," he explained. "Will you sit down and have a bit, or wait for the regular meal?"

"Oh, we won't bother you. We'll wait," said Old King Brady, "but we have a lot to tell you, Mr. Harrison. Last night was anything but a night of rest for us."

"You went over to Snake Islet?"

"Indeed we did, but listen to the whole story. It is one which you will find it hard to believe."

That Mr. Harrison was deeply impressed by the story the Bradys had to tell need scarcely be said.

"This is a pretty state of affairs!" he cried, after reading the Duke's letter. "Joe Powell should be arrested at once. There can't be the least doubt that he meant to carry off Susie. That's her room where Miss Montgomery slept. Why not go over to Jamesburg and get a warrant for the fellow. Bad as I knew him to be, I didn't consider him as bad as all this."

"We have thought it over and we have talked it over carefully," said Old King Brady. "We have resolved to tie to the Duke."

"Tie to a lunatic, Mr. Brady! This is madness. Think of Miss Montgomery's situation."

"Indeed, we have given it full thought, Mr. Harrison," replied the old detective. "But you must understand that Miss Montgomery is a young woman who is well able to take care of herself. This is not the first time she has been in such a situation. What we want is to put down this gang permanently. To arrest Joe Powell would surely throw them all on the alert. It might even cause them to kill Miss Montgomery. I consider my way the best."

"It is your business. Am I to speak to my children of this?"

"Decidedly not. At the same time I would place a guard outside the house to-night and let him understand what he is there for if you have a man you can trust."

"I have. It shall be done. I am convinced that you are right about those rascals. They are in on our vein."

"Probably. But tell me, I have heard that you copper miners up here often come upon old prehistoric workings of considerable extent. The work of the Mound Builders."

"That's right. I have been through a gallery of theirs half a mile long. That's over Ontonagon way. It really is wonderful what they were able to do. What tools they used and how they ever got the ore out, no one knows."

"Any such old workings here?"

"Not that I know anything about."

"It occurred to me that possibly the Powells might have struck over a working under the lake between the two islets, and that your drift in No. 1 where the disappearances have taken place may be secretly connected with it."

"It's an idea, certainly, but at the same time it is one which I find it hard to believe; all the same, I am willing to believe almost anything now. Why, if you were to tell me that my Will was landing in with this crooked bunch I should even have to believe that."

To this the old detective made no reply. Secretly, he had been wondering whether this might not indeed be the case, and had said as much to Harry.

Now, when this tip went into No. 1 to-night," he said, "you trust my father, Mr. Harrison."

"You may rely upon that, Mr. Brady," replied the old detective. "Even if it has to be done openly, I will go."

It was a slow day for the Bradys.

Out of respect to Mr. Harrison's wishes they kept away from the mine.

During the morning they drove out on the ice and skirted around Big Manitou Island.

The works upon it seemed to be very extensive.

That they were being closely watched they knew, for they saw a man come several times out of a small building which appeared to be the office and take them in through an opera glass.

He looked to be a person of about Joe Powell's build, and the Bradys concluded that it was he.

Alice's absence was mentioned at the breakfast-table to the Harrisons, Old King Brady leading them to believe that she had gone to Rushmore in a hired sleigh which called for her in the early morning.

He regretted being obliged to do this, but some explanation had to be made.

At dinner Will was particularly grumpy and by the time they got around to supper he would not open his mouth, and Susie was almost as bad.

This seemed to make the father very nervous.

After supper he had a long, private talk with the detectives.

"I feel greatly troubled about Susie," he said. "Really, she ought to be told what has happened. There is no knowing what Joe Powell may do."

"I advise against it," replied Old King Brady, "but do as you please. Did he ever visit her here?"

"Oh, yes! He used to visit her right along until I ordered him to stop it. I am afraid they have met in Rushmore since. She is a good girl, Mr. Brady, but as weak as water. If she was told this I really believe it would turn her against the fellow."

"Tell her, then," said the old detective. "Call her in; take her into our full confidence and see what comes of it if it will relieve your mind."

Mr. Harrison then called Susie into the sitting-room and, having locked the door, said:

"I suppose you girls have been wondering what has become of Miss Montgomery?"

"Well, and so we have," replied Susie, with a defiant look at the old detective. "Will says that no sleigh came over here in the early morning. Is her name Montgomery, then?"

"Nor did there, Miss Susie," said the old detective. "That was just a little fiction of mine, of which your father don't approve, so we are going to tell you the whole story. I beg you will respect our confidence, but I shall not attempt to bind you to anything."

"Tell me!" cried Susie. "I want to know."

"Know, then, that she was carried away during the night by men sent here by Joe Powell, they mistaking her for you," said Mr. Harrison.

Susie turned deathly pale.

"I believe that less than I believe the sleigh story!" she cried. "Joe wouldn't do such a thing."

"Just the same, he did it," said Old King Brady. "Repeat our story, Miss Susie, before you judge. We are detectives."



ings. We are trying to solve the mystery of the disappearance in Shaft No. 1."

"Just what Will said!" cried Susie. "He says your name isn't Brown; that it's Brady, and——"

"He is right," broke in Old King Brady, "but listen to the story."

The old detective then proceeded to tell the girl all, and wound up by showing her the Duke's letter.

"And he has kept her!" cried Susie. "He has not sent her back! I would not have believed it. I——"

She burst into tears.

"When did you see Joe last to talk with him, daughter?" asked Mr. Harrison, gravely.

Susie, between sobs, admitted that she had met him in Rushmore a week before.

"He wanted me to elope with him then," she said, "but I refused. I—I still loved him, but Will has told me things about him which made me feel that I must give him up, and I told him so. I told him that I would never meet him again."

"And you see the result," said Mr. Harrison. "Would you marry a man who would treat you like that?"

"Never!" cried Susie. "It's all over now. I hate him. You were right, father. I should have listened to you. But it is terrible about poor Miss Montgomery. He ought to be arrested. What are you going to do?"

"That depends upon the Duke," said Old King Brady. "We shall take him at his word and be in Shaft No. 1 at midnight. After we know what is coming out of that we shall be able to decide."

"Let me go, too, father!" cried Susie. "I would just like to see that man once again and in your presence. After that never any more for me."

"What do you say, Mr. Brady?" the superintendent asked.

"It's up to you," replied the old detective. "Personally, I have no objection."

"Then let it be so, Susie. I hope you have decided to respect my confidence."

"Oh, I have!" cried Susie. "I won't say one word to any one, and least of all to Will."

Her father looked up sharply.

"Susie," he said, "do you think Will can be in this crooked deal?"

"Don't ask me," was the reply. "I don't know what to think."

"But you know something and you ought to tell it," said Old King Brady.

She hesitated for a moment, and then said:

"Well, then, here it is: I do know that Will gets a lot of extra money over and above his salary. That I've known this long time. He has been buying real estate in Duluth, father. I ought to have told you before, but he made me promise not to. However, it's out now."

"I have been afraid there was something wrong going on for a long time," replied the superintendent. "However, I shall believe nothing against the boy until it is proved."

Such was the result of this conference with Miss Susie. On the whole, Old King Brady was glad it had occurred.

The evening dragged slowly by.

At half-past eleven, Will had not come in.

It had been explained to the Bradys that he was supposed to be playing cards at a club to which the foremen and others connected with the mine belonged.

"Let us start now and we will look in at the club," Mr. Harrison said. "It will be an excuse for our being out at this hour. After we leave it we will slip into the shaft-house where I have all arranged for us to be lowered down into the mine."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BLOCKING OF THE WAY.

The light which had attracted Alice's attention proved to proceed from a hole in the wall about as big as a good-sized head of cabbage.

As she and the Indian squaw drew nearer, Alice caught the sound of a man's voice talking.

It was a deep, gruff voice, and Alice instantly recognized it as that of Superintendent Powell, who sat at the next table to her at the Eagle House the morning before.

In just such a voice had the superintendent talked politics with a man who sat opposite.

Old Mollie put her finger to her lips and pointed to the hole.

Alice pressed forward and ventured to peep in.

Here, in a small enclosure, but whether part of the cave or hollowed out by the hand of man Alice could not tell, were gathered five of the singular masked figures who had assisted in her capture.

One, a large person, sat in an arm-chair upon a raised platform.

The other four were standing facing him, partially surrounding a stont, elderly gentleman who had his hands tied behind him.

Instantly Alice recognized the man as Simon Dithlow, from the photograph given to Old King Brady by his brother, the broker.

Beside the big man in the chair was a sort of altar, upon which rested a human skull and from the eye-holes a bright light streamed forth.

There was no other light in the chamber.

Alice drew away quickly, not daring to risk being seen.

The talk had ceased now.

For a moment or two the silence continued and then the elder Powell's deep voice spoke again:

"Well, Mr. Dithlow," he said, "what is the word? You have had ample time for reflection. Announce your decision."

"The word is, no! Emphatically, no!" another voice—presumably Dithlow's—fairly shouted.

And he added:

"I expect nothing from you but death, Powell, but I'd sooner die than yield to your ridiculous request."

"Ha! still stubborn, I perceive," was the reply. "You don't want to forget, Dithlow, that there are worse things than death. Torture, for instance."

"You have hinted at that before——" began Dithlow, when he was interrupted by the gruff voice, which thundered:

"Silence! In pronouncing my name you have broken the rules of our order; for that alone you deserve death."

"Ridiculous!" flashed Dithlow. "As if the order of the



Seven Sevens had any further excuse for its existence after going on the way you have done."

"Silence! Listen! Once more let me rehearse the situation. This is the sixth time you have been brought before the tribunal. If you still refuse on the seventh, then let your fate be on your own head. We are all tired of our lives on these lonely islands. We want to get back to the world. In spite of the money we have made by our operations, of which you have received a double share, we want more. We propose to have it, and then we vanish and the copper business knows us no more. Dithlow, you have been paid just a million too much. The Seven Sevens demands that million back as a rebate. I have shown you the way in which you can bestow it upon us. Either that million comes or you will be tortured until it does come, one of the two. Is it still no, dear brother?"

"It's no! Always no!" roared the mine president. "The money is mine under our agreement. You can torture me, you can kill me, but I shall never give it up."

"We'll see about that," was the retort. "Now then, boys, take him away."

Mollie caught Alice's arm and pulled her back.

"Oh, they are coming; they will catch us!" she whispered. "We must hide."

She hurried Alice along the line of the wall.

Before they had gone far the light of a lantern appeared behind them.

"They'll see us—they'll get us!" groaned the squaw. "Oh, what a fool I was to undertake this!"

Still clutching Alice's arm she hurried on so fast that it was next to impossible to keep up with her.

Presently they came upon a deep niche in the wall and Alice was pulled into it.

"Perhaps we are safe here," panted Mollie. "It won't be safe to go any further."

They stood in the shadows and presently the five masks passed the niche, leading the wretched Dithlow.

To Alice's immense relief the eyes of none of them were turned their way.

"There!" breathed Mollie, "we are safe for the moment, but we must stop here till they go back again."

"Mollie," said Alice, "do you know that man?"

"Sure," replied the squaw. "Of course, he's the high mucky-muck. He's not only the boss of the Seven Sevens, but he's the president of the mine."

"Mollie," said Alice, firmly, "when we go out of here I want that man to go with us."

"Oh, I can't do that! He's nothing to me. Old money-bags! Old lunks! Why don't he shell out, now they've got him foul? He's just as big a crook as the rest of them. Why should you bother your head about him?"

"Because my father is interested in him. He will give you two hundred dollars instead of one, Mollie, if we bring Mr. Dithlow out with us. Can it be done?"

"Make it three hundred and it shall be done," said Mollie, eagerly.

"That's a bargain," replied Alice, "and I shall hold you to it. Where are they taking him?"

"Not far. I know."

"Is this a natural cave, Mollie?"

"This is, yes. The other isn't; the passages are not; they were made by my people ages ago."

"How well you talk, Mollie! How did you learn to talk so well?"

"How? Oh, the fathers of the old mission taught me when I was a girl. I can read and write, too. French and English."

"And your own language?"

"No, I've forgotten most of that."

"What tribe do you belong to?"

"Oh, I don't know. That's too far back," said the squaw in a way which plainly indicated that this was a subject she did not care to talk about.

Presently they heard the masks returning and once more the two women had the good fortune to be overlooked.

The masks were talking and laughing as they went past.

"He'll come off his perch, all right," one said.

"He'll have to," replied another. "The boss will never let up on him till he does."

They passed on and presently the light vanished.

"It's all right now, miss," said Mollie. "They are off for bed and chances are they'll sleep till noon; they usually do when they meet down here at night."

She hurried Alice on, using the flashlight herself, and as pleased over it as a child with a new toy.

Presently they came upon a wooden door set in a niche in the wall.

"He's in here if we can only get the door open," she said, "but I don't know how we are going to do that unless a key I've got will fit the lock."

She proceeded to try it, but the key would not fit.

"Perhaps I can work it," said Alice, and she produced her bunch of skeleton keys.

"What are those things?" demanded the squaw.

Alice explained and proceeded to try them in the lock.

Presently she found one which did the business and she threw the door open.

Mr. Dithlow, no longer tied up, stood facing them.

"You, Mollie!" he cried. "I thought it was those wretches back again. I wondered why they made so much fuss about opening the door. But why are you here, and why is this?"

"Let her speak for herself, boss," replied Mollie. "It's she who brought me here. I claim no credit. I don't owe you nothing as I know of."

"Mr. Dithlow," said Alice, "my name is Brown. With my father I was staying at Mr. Harrison's house as his guest. To-night this interesting order of which I judge you are a member dragged me out of my bed and brought me here a prisoner. Mollie has very kindly offered to assist me to escape, and we propose to take you along with us."

The old millionaire's eyes sparkled.

"What's this? Do you know a way out of this place that we don't know, Mollie?" he cried.

"Sure I do," replied Mollie. "If you will give me two hundred dollars I show it to you."

"You shall have it."

"Mollie will be too rich," said Alice, beginning to wonder if she would not have to promise more on her own account. "I have already agreed to give her two hundred to let you go with us."

"I don't ask for no more," said Mollie, "but he ought to pay something."



"I'll pay it all," said Mr. Dithlow, hastily. "Where does this road of yours come out, Mollie?"

"On Eagle Islet."

"Where I shall be safe if I can only get to Mr. Harrison."

"Yes, if," said Mollie, meaningly. "But the three of us ought to be good for one, I should say."

"If I was only armed," said Dithlow.

"I have a revolver," replied Alice. "I know how to use it, too, but I suggest we lose no time, Mr. Dithlow. I see you have a lantern here. You may as well take it along."

Mr. Dithlow took down the lantern and they started, Mollie striding ahead.

"How can I ever thank you, Miss Brown?" murmured the mine president.

"You owe me no thanks," replied Alice, in a low tone.

"My name is not Brown, by the way, but you can call me that. I am actually one of the Brady detectives, employed by your brother to find you. I don't care to have Mollie know that I am a detective. It may make her change her mind."

"Detectives, eh?" said Dithlow, uneasily. "I suppose all Chicago is talking about my disappearance."

"Surely."

"And—well—er—what do they think?"

"I fancy they have about given you up. Did you come here of your own accord?"

"Certainly not. I was enticed on board a steam yacht and was brought up here. That was just before the lake froze—I suppose it is frozen tight now."

"Yes."

"Well, this has been a trying experience. But it will be all right for you and your people. I suppose the famous Old King Brady is the man you alluded to as your father?"

"That's right."

"And he is a guest of Mr. Harrison's?"

"Yes."

"Does Mr. Harrison know who he is and why he is here?"

"Certainly."

Dithlow gave a slight groan.

Evidently the man was afraid that his troubles had only just begun.

Alice had half a mind to tell him that she had been an unseen listener to what passed in the lodge-room of the Seven Sevens, but she concluded to keep him guessing, as she expressed it to herself, so she walked on in silence.

This did not appear to suit Mr. Dithlow, either.

He asked for particulars of her capture, and Alice gave them.

"It was Susie Harrison they were after," remarked Dithlow, then.

"Yes, I know. Interesting way of getting a wife. That young Powell must be a particularly fine specimen of a man."

"He's a better specimen than his father, then," snapped Dithlow. "It was he who kidnapped me."

"And, of course, you'll make it warm for him. It will cost him his job, I suppose? We can arrest him if you say the word."

Alice could have laughed in the face of the old scoundrel, but seemed so perplexed and disturbed.

"Oh—er—I don't know," said Dithlow. "I shall have to think about that. Perhaps, after all, it would be better to hush this business up. I don't care for publicity. I—er—well, we'll think about it before we decide. I'll make it all right with Old King Brady, at all events."

All this time they had been following the right-hand wall of the cave, but now Mollie suddenly halted and they overtook her, to find that she was standing at the entrance of one of those singular galleries which scientists have decided are Mound Builders' work.

"We go this way," she said.

Dithlow looked surprised.

"Why, Mollie, aren't you mistaken?" he asked. "This is just the road to—well, you know where."

"The workmen's quarters," replied Mollie, finishing his sentence for him. "Why don't you speak out, old man? You'll never come back here again, that's one sure thing. What's the need of secrecy now? But that shows how much you know about Big Manitou Cave. Come on."

She entered the passage, advancing slowly and flashing her lantern close down upon the floor.

She had not gone far before she stooped and pulled aside quite a large block of stone, which lay against the wall on the left, revealing an opening similar to the one she and Alice had crawled through in order to get into the cave.

"There!" she cried, triumphantly. "You didn't know about that, did you? Now, get down on those old marrow-bones of yours and follow me."

"Beast!" muttered Dithlow, beneath his breath, as Mollie crawled into the opening.

He followed her, however, and Alice brought up the rear.

It seemed quite a long way through that hole, but at last they came out into another passage and once more were able to stand upright.

Along this they advanced, but they had not gone far before they perceived a light in the distance, moving towards them.

The squaw grew greatly excited.

"Now, who can that be?" she exclaimed. "So far as I know there is only one person in the whole world who knows about this passage, and the dear knows he's far enough away."

As they waited, Alice saw that the moving light ahead of them had also stopped, but presently it began to come forward again, and in a minute they saw that it was a lantern held in the hand of a tall man who wore a high hat.

"What! what! what!" cried Mollie. "No, it can't be!"

But it was!

The man raised the lantern on a line with his face and Alice recognized the Duke of Douglas Street.

"Mammy! Oh, mammy!" he shouted. "Come on!"

"Oh, Larry! Oh, my boy!" cried the squaw, and she was just starting ahead when suddenly, and without a warning sound, a vast mass of rock fell from the roof of the passage directly in her path with a deafening crash.

The earth trembled, the dust rose in a suffocating cloud. Mollie gave a piercing scream and fell on her knees.

"Oh, my boy! My boy is dead!" she moaned.

Then, in the distance as it seemed, the crash was repeated.



Was it the echo, or had there been another rock fall there in Big Manitou Cave?

Alice turned her flashlight on the fallen mass and saw that their way was completely blocked.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MIDNIGHT MEETING IN THE MINE.

Old King Brady went into the clubroom with Mr. Harrison, while Harry remained outside with Susie.

It was quite a large room and there were a good many men assembled, some playing cards and others at the billiard and pool tables, but Will Harrison was not among them.

"Has Will been here this evening, Mr. Fuller?" the superintendent asked one of the men.

"No, he hasn't, sir," was the reply. "I haven't seen Mr. Will since quitting-time."

Mr. Harrison immediately left the room.

"This must be looked into," remarked the superintendent, as they walked toward the place where Harry and Susie had been left. "I have always supposed that when Will went out of an evening he went to the club. He must be made to give an account of himself. I have stood enough."

"Well, father, did you find Will?" asked Susie, when they came up.

"No, I didn't. He hasn't been at the club this evening," replied Mr. Harrison.

No more was said, and they went on to the big shaft-house, meeting no one.

Mr. Harrison knocked sharply on the door, which was immediately opened by a rough-looking man.

"Well, here we are, Mike," said the superintendent. "Are you ready?"

"All ready, boss. Does Miss Susie go down, too?"

"She does."

They entered the big cage used for lowering the workmen, and Mike started the engine going.

Mr. Harrison had a lantern which had been provided by Mike and Harry carried another.

"How deep are you here?" asked Old King Brady.

"About twelve hundred feet," replied the superintendent, "but we don't go that far. The place where the disappearances have taken place is in the drift at the five-hundred-foot level. Mike will stop the cage there."

The cage came to a standstill a moment later and, Mr. Harrison opening the door, they found themselves at the mouth of a tunnel which pierced the ledge horizontally.

He stepped across and helped Susie over, the Bradys following.

As they walked along they saw that the drift had been driven in on a line with the vein. They were walking over what appeared to be a bed of almost pure copper.

"What time is it, I wonder?" asked Harry, consulting his watch.

"Ten minutes to twelve," he added. "It's to be hoped the Duke will be prompt."

Meanwhile, they were advancing, and Old King Brady was on the lookout for some secret means of egress, for that such existed he felt sure, but his observation brought no success.

At last they came to the end of the drift, which was against a wall of almost pure copper.

"No Duke as yet," remarked Mr. Harrison. "It must be midnight now."

"Just twelve o'clock," replied Harry, consulting his watch.

"And by the same token there comes his grace now!" exclaimed Old King Brady, looking back.

And the Duke it was approaching them, sure enough.

He was dressed precisely as the Bradys had seen him in Chicago. His threadbare Prince Albert looked shabbier than ever, his flaming red tie was just as brilliant and the battered plug hat seemed to fairly shine with whatever strange polish it suited him to apply to it.

Old King Brady stepped forward to meet him.

"Good-evening, Duke!" he said. "Your grace is promptness itself. It is just midnight now."

"Yes, I know. I am always prompt," replied the Duke. "But this is not a good evening, Brady. It is a very bad evening. Why the woman?"

"This is Mr. Harrison and his daughter, Duke."

"We have met before, Mr. Lawrence, I believe," said Harrison, extending his hand.

But the Duke ignored it.

"I have nothing to do with you, sir," he said, "and less than nothing with your daughter. Don't introduce me. I don't want to know her, much less speak to her. What I started out to do was intended for the benefit of my friends, the Bradys, alone. I have failed."

"Failed, your grace! How is that?" asked Old King Brady, anxiously.

"Permit me to tell my story in my own way," replied the Duke. "It may prove a trifle lengthy, but that can't be helped. Gentlemen, you behold in me the adopted son of an Indian squaw. I was born in this section. I was raised here. I was educated by the Jesuit Fathers at their mission on Snake Islet, and from my Indian mammy I learned a secret which the fathers also knew. It was the existence of a large cavern under Snake Islet, the channel and which extended in under the ground upon which we now stand. Connected with this cavern are a series of ancient drifts made by the Mound Builders, extending through veins of copper closely associated with native silver which are fabulously rich. This secret I preserved for years until finally in an evil hour I was induced to sell it to that fat, crooked, pig-headed old rascal, Simon Dithlow, for the sum of \$100,000, he having got wind of the fact that such old workings existed through a report printed by one of the fathers in an old book he had picked up somewhere. Such was the origin of the society of the Seven Sevens. Such is their secret which has weighed heavily upon my conscience on account of their crooked work and their crooked ways."

"Then they have been secretly taking ore on our line," broke in Mr. Harrison.

"Sir," retorted the Duke, "I have nothing to do with you. I do not know you. I deal with the Bradys alone. As much as three million has been secretly taken from these workings and divided among seven men, the Seven Sevens, as they choose to style themselves. Dithlow is one, the two Powells, father and son, make three, your crooked son, Harrison, is No. 4; Harter, the foreman at Big Mani-



No. 5, a fellow named Klunch is No. 6, and I was originally No. 7, but I have not met with them since the last organization, nor have I received a cent's worth of spoils. I refused to take my share or have anything to do with them, but I swore to keep their secret. When they induced Simon Dithlow and threatened him with death unless he gave them a round million, which they did, I deemed it my duty to expose this crooked gang, and I sent for the Bradys and gave them a clew. They are here."

His head was wagging faster than ever now.

"Not only that," continued the Duke, "but they abducted your workmen, Harrison, as you know. These men are all alive. They have been kept in the cave and made to work without wages. They are never allowed to come out. Think of the rascality of it all! Then Joe Powell wanted a wife. You wouldn't have him for a son-in-law, your daughter wouldn't have him for a husband, so he sends creatures of his own, disguised in the peculiar garb of the Seven Sevens to abduct her. They blunder. Get the wrong girl, Montgomery by name. I try to rescue her. Find my old mammy already on the job. See her, see the Montgomery girl, see old Dithlow, think I have won out for my friends, the Bradys, when, presto change! The heavens fall and they are all buried alive!"

"Duke! What do you mean?" cried Old King Brady. "Follow me and I'll show you, old man," replied the Duke, and he turned and strutted away, wagging his head from side to side.

Of course, all followed him, but they did not have to go far, for presently the Duke paused and pointing to the left-hand wall of the drift threw the light of his lantern upon an opening barely big enough for a man to crawl through.

"That's the way Tim McCormick went—that's the way they all went," he said, "and that's the way we are going now."

He had removed a piece of rock which was almost pure copper used to plug the hole.

He stooped and crawled through the opening. The others following, they found themselves in one of the old prehistoric galleries which extended upward and downward on an abrupt slant.

"This way leads to a secret trap-door in the cellar of your ore house, Harrison," said the Duke, waving his hand upward. "The other way it communicates with the cavern, and that is the way we go."

He hurried on down the slope.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

The Duke honestly believed that old Mollie and her companions had perished under that fall of rock.

Equally certain was Mollie that her beloved stepson had met with a similar fate, and Alice for awhile had her hands full to quiet the squaw.

Mr. Dithlow's diegu t knew no bounds.

"We shall have to get back," he said. "Our only way now is to pass out by the regular entrance under the old mine-house if we are not interfered with. I have been here. They will surely have some one on the watch."

"Well, try it, anyway," said Alice. "Of course, we can't stay here."

They started to retreat their steps, but it was only to

quickly discover that the situation was even worse than they had supposed, for before they had gone far they came upon another pile of fallen rock.

The second crash they had heard was no echo.

It was despairing.

They returned to the other obstruction and for awhile all worked to try to clear the way.

It was little use, however. They soon came upon masses which their united strength could not move.

But the true situation was different from what they supposed.

The probabilities are there was a slight earthquake shock that night.

At all events, the rock fell in three places instead of two and the third fall cut off the imprisoned miners and the guard which had them in charge.

Mollie was wrong in supposing that no one knew of the road to Eagle Islet except herself and the Duke.

This was known to all of the Seven Sevens except Dithlow himself, who had always been kept more or less in the dark about the doings of this secret band. The guard also knew of it and finding themselves hopelessly cut off in the direction of Snake Islet by one huge block of stone which had fallen, when morning came they, together with the imprisoned workmen, started to dig out the other way.

It was not until noon that the accident became known to the Powells and their associates, but they had the duties of the day to perform at the Manitou Mine.

They knew that Alice, Mollie and Dithlow had vanished, and when they learned what had happened, and through Will Harrison that no one had turned up on Eagle Islet, they came to the conclusion that there had been a general collapse and that not only their prisoners, but the workmen and their guard as well were all dead.

At all events it was not until night that they made any move to ascertain the true situation.

Meanwhile, the miners and the guard were working all they knew how to force an exit in the direction of Eagle Islet, and as the day advanced the noise they made reached the ears of Alice, Mollie and Dithlow.

They hurried to the obstruction behind them and waited with renewed hope.

Towards night they had advanced far enough for Dithlow to be able to make known their presence on the other side.

"Keep it up, boys!" he shouted. "The day of the Seven Sevens is all over. It's a thousand apiece to you if you get me safe out of this."

And keep it up they did, with occasional intervals of rest. At about eleven o'clock the last obstruction was removed and the miners and the guard joined Alice, Mollie and Dithlow.

Long before they had been told that they had another obstruction to encounter.

Dithlow urged them to go right at it and, fatigued though they were, they did so, and it was necessary if they expected to save their lives, for the air was now growing very foul.

At midnight they were still at it, with only the most general idea of how much further they had to go.

They were working away while the Duke was telling his long winded story in the 500 foot level drift of old No. 1.



The Bradys, with Mr. Harrison and his daughter, followed the Duke down the slope.

Presently they came to a cross-passage opening on their left.

"Where does this lead to, Duke?" the old detective asked.

"That, sir," replied the Duke, "leads to a small cave on Deer Islet, the existence of which I believe to be known only to myself. It is there that I spent this black day which has just passed, waiting for the hour of my appointment to come."

It was not long now before they came upon the fallen rock.

"There!" said the Duke. "Behold the tomb of those you seek. Alas! for my Indian mammy!"

All had been still until he spoke, but now behind the rocks a shrill cry was raised.

"Oh, Larry! Dear Larry! Are you then alive?" a woman's voice screamed.

"Mammy!" yelled the Duke.

"Alice, are you there?" shouted Harry.

"Here, Harry!" Alice's voice replied. "We had given it up. We had no idea we were so near through."

And immediately a great bustle was heard and the rocks went flying.

It was bustle on both sides, for the Bradys and Mr. Harrison helped, and the Duke went at it for all he was worth. Even Susie lent a hand, and in a short time the way was cleared.

"Ha! Mr. Dithlow!" cried Harrison. "I thought I recognized your voice. Let me introduce Old King Brady, who has been searching the world for you! My missing men, I see. Well, boys, what charges have you to make against this man?"

"He is boss of the whole bunch and ought to be arrested," one cried.

They returned by the way they had come, and the signal being given to Mike, the Bradys, the Harrisons, the Duke and Mollie were hauled up in the cage, the others remaining behind for a second trip.

On the way up Alice explained Mr. Dithlow's position to Old King Brady.

"I insist that the man be arrested," said Mr. Harrison.

For a moment Old King Brady was silent, and then he said:

"Mr. Harrison, I can't do it. I have nothing to do with this end of the affair, but Joe Powell abducted Miss Montgomery, and those associated with him helped. If I can get them they are my game."

The others came up then.

"Let us go directly to Snake Islet and wait for the Powells and their pals to come up out of the cave, if they are down there," said Old King Brady. "Perhaps your five men will go with us," he added. "Certainly you have suffered enough at their hands."

The five men consented, and the start was made.

Mr. Harrison went with them and so did the guard. Alice, with Susan, Mr. Dithlow, Mollie and the Duke, went to the independent's house.

Before the coach left Mr. Dithlow gave each one a check for \$1,000, telling them that he would pay them later. He settled with Mollie in the same way as soon as they got

to the house. He even offered Alice and the Duke a thousand each, but both refused.

Arrived at Snake Islet, they forced an entrance to the old mission-house and this time the Bradys, posted by Alice, found the trap-door.

Raising it and listening, they could hear voices in the distance.

They waited over an hour, and then heard the men coming.

As luck would have it, Will Harrison was the first to appear, and the Bradys promptly pounced upon him.

Harry covered him with a revolver so he had no chance to sound a warning, and they got the elder Powell and Joe in the same way. These three proved to be all there were below.

They were taken over to Eagle Islet and locked in one of the ore houses.

Next morning the Bradys rounded them up at Jamesburg jail.

No attempt was made to get the others, who promptly disappeared.

And so did the Duke and old Mollie do the vanishing act.

Later they learned, however, that the Duke was still parading Milwaukee avenue and that an old Indian squaw was keeping house for him. Later still—but a short time ago—they read of the death of this remarkable eccentric, in a Chicago paper.

The Powells and Will Harrison were held on Old King Brady's charge until Mr. Harrison could act, and they were then rearrested on the charge of robbing the Eagle Islet Copper Co., as was Simon Dithlow, then in Chicago, to which city he returned with the Bradys and Alice.

There was a long delay over their case, and the prisoners were admitted to bail.

At last the charge was withdrawn and Old King Brady, curious to understand why, wrote to Mr. Harrison and asked him.

He got a prompt reply to the effect that Dithlow and the Powells had made retribution to the Eagle Islet Company to the tune of two millions, and that his son had chipped in a quarter of a million more.

And so the Seven Sevens wriggled out of it.

The Bradys were indifferent.

To them Mr. Dithlow acted very liberally and in addition to the check, he sent Alice a fine diamond brooch, with a most complimentary letter.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BRADYS AND THE BURGLARS; OR, THE CLEW IN THE BANK VAULT."

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## A QUEER COMPANION.

By John Sherman

One morning the sunbeams came struggling through the clouds, and assured me that we were likely to have a pleasant day.

I had not been in the woods for more than a week, and I took this opportunity to stretch myself.

The ground to the northward was nearly all covered with water, but there was a finely-wooded strip to the southward and westward, and in this direction we went.

Within three hours after reaching the forest we had shot two roan antelopes and a fine springbok, and our enthusiasm was at a high pitch.

Just after noon we bagged another springbok, and in half an hour afterward we discovered a herd of buffaloes through an opening in the wood.

Away went the game, and away went we, and the result was that in little over an hour we had brought down two of the best bulls of the herd.

We took careful bearings of the place, so as to send some of the natives out on the next day for the meat, and then started on our return.

We pushed on for an hour, when night and storm came together, and the darkness shut down so intensely that I could not see my own hand as I held it up before me.

We secured our horses as well as we could, and then called the dogs to us, and bade them lie down and keep quiet; but they did not seem inclined to do either.

They ran to and fro, howling and snapping, and if I had had the cords with me I would have tied them; but I had nothing of the kind. I was forced to let them go.

Rain was falling, but not very heavily, and having found a soft, grassy spot beneath a large tree of some sort, I drew a springbok skin over my shoulders and lay down.

But I could not sleep.

The dogs kept up their running and howling and the horses seemed uneasy.

We had no lantern with us, but I had some matches, and by striking half a dozen of them I was enabled to see that the horses were safe and that all appeared right in other directions.

"There is no knowing," said one, "what may come along in this darkness, so I think I'll sleep in a tree."

The idea struck me as being a good one, and I told him I would follow his example.

We asked the others if they wished to do the same thing, but they told us that they did not intend to sleep.

By the light of my waxen matches I had discovered the form of the tree beneath which I had been resting, and without much trouble I made my way up until I reached a point where the main trunk branched off into three limbs, and here I fixed myself, getting a good seat, and a good view for my back.

I called to my companion, and he informed me that he was safe.

The rain fell upon me, dripping lazily through the foliage above me, but I did not mind that.

The dogs disturbed me most with their terrible howling.

I hailed one of the men and asked him if he could not stop them.

They were now directly beneath my tree, and yelping like mad.

The men came, and finally succeeded in getting them away, and by and by I dropped off into a doze and obtained quite a comfortable sleep.

When I was at length awakened it was by the dogs under my tree again, where they were howling and snapping worse than ever.

I halloed at them, and told them to go and lie down, and they were once more quieted.

Again I slept, and again I was aroused as before.

The rain was still falling, and the darkness was as thick and impenetrable as ever.

Just for experiment's sake, I swept my hand before my eyes, but could see nothing of it.

A second time I passed my hand along, and while straining my eyes to detect it I fancied that there was a change in the darkness.

I could not see my hand, but I thought I saw two luminous spots not far away in the gloom, like phosphorescent bubbles on inky water.

I held up my hand and they were shut out.

I moved my hand away, and saw them again.

So it was no illusion of my vision.

I watched the spots for some seconds, and was convinced that they moved.

I noticed also that they changed color, from a red to a greenish hue.

I was now thoroughly awake.

My first impulse was to slide down to the ground.

My second was to strike a match.

But I did neither.

I knew that daylight could not be very far off, and I finally determined to stay where I was.

There may have been a little recklessness in the decision, but I could not help it.

My rifle was upon the ground, but I had my heavy pistols with me, and they were both carefully loaded and had been kept dry.

By and by the blackness of the forest began to break and those two luminous spots grew dim.

Slowly the veil was lifted, and ere long I saw other spots, and more of them.

The seconds crept on, and the darkness grew less and less; and finally my companion of the night was revealed to me.

There he crouched upon the limb on which I sat, not more than fifteen feet from me—a full-grown leopard.

Had he been a full-grown lion, I think I should have been tempted to fire.

The chance was too great to throw away, and at that distance my pistol was powerful enough.

I drew the weapon and cocked it, and then carefully took my aim with both hands, the line of my sight striking one of those glaring eyes.

I fired, and then dropped from my perch to the ground; and in a moment more the leopard was by my side; but I was unharmed, and he was dead.

In a very few moments my friends were upon the spot,



while the dogs, as though to show us that they had been in the right all the while, capered and yelped with delight.

It was rather a pleasant adventure at the end of our night's experience; and the leopard skin was reserved for my cabinet of souvenirs.

### ORINOCO RUBBER FORESTS.

In answer to an inquiry concerning the wild rubber forests of the Orinoco River, Consul Isaac A. Manning of La Guayra, furnishes the following consular report, prepared by Consular Agent Robert Henderson of Ciudad Bolivar:

Two elastic products, or two kinds of rubber, are shipped from Southeastern Venezuela—the *Castilloa elastica*, rubber used where great elasticity is required, and *balata*, a class of gutta-percha. The prices paid for these products per pound in Ciudad Bolivar are 32 to 40 cents for *balata* and 65 cents to \$1.10 for india rubber.

The products are brought from the district where they are collected to Ciudad Bolivar either on muleback or in ox-carts, at a cost of \$2.40 to \$4 per 100 pounds. To reach the Cassiquiare district a number of portages would be necessary, on account of rapids. Ciudad Bolivar is closely connected with Port of Spain, Trinidad, and will soon have direct steamship communication with the port of La Guayra, thus giving it easy communication with the United States.

The districts of Jerez and the Orinoco delta produce the greater part of the *balata*, while the greater production of india rubber is from Sucre and the Amazonas territory. The lands from which these products are collected belong to the Government of Venezuela, although many concessions have been granted in this district, some of which are in dispute. One entering there for the purpose of exploiting either of these products would have to be careful to keep free from trespass suits for having worked within the unmarked boundaries of some concessionaire.

To exploit either rubber or *balata*, one must first get permission from the Government of the State where the product is to be taken, according to the law covering the matter, which fixes the amount of local tax to be paid the State by each collector, and requires that the tapping shall be done in a manner calculated to prevent injury to the tree, and during certain months of the year, usually from April to December. The bulk of the output is gathered during this period. One man can collect the sap from only one *balata* tree a day, while a day's work among the *castilloa* or india rubber covers ten or twelve trees. The *balata* tree produces three to five pounds of gutta-percha, and the india rubber tree about half a pound of dry coagulated rubber.

Coagulation of the *balata* is brought about by boiling; that of the rubber by smoking or by use of acids. No established formula seems to be in use by any rubber hunters.

The product is sold freely, is rarely contracted for before gathering, and no syndicate holds any monopoly of this industry. Concessions granted vary from two to twenty-five square leagues. The rubber hunters usually sell their product for cash, although where the purchaser is also a merchant a good part of the money is turned into merchandise.

As to the feasibility of North Americans performing the work of rubber gatherers, it is, of course, necessary to understand that rubber and *balata* usually are found in the lowlands, which are apt to be swampy, infested with infectious insects, miasmas, etc. Proper care to guard from the dangers of low tropical countries should, however, make it possible for men from the United States to work there. It is better, however, to employ native hunters, who are apt to be immune from yellow fever and who have become possessed of congenital ability to withstand the rigors of the climate.

### FISH PROTECTED BY ELECTRICITY.

When it comes to a consideration of those who are well heeled to protect themselves against enemies, do not forget the electrical fishes that run in the sea.

Nature has endowed these denizens of the deep with batteries which come in right handily in overcoming foes of those of their finny neighbors upon which they prey.

Probably the most dangerous is the torpedo, a fish of the same family and appearance as the rays. The torpedo is a disk-like creature, frequently attaining a length of five feet and a weight of 200 pounds. They abound on the Atlantic coast and sometimes fishermen who make them captive in their nets are very sorry for it. Recklessly handled, the torpedoes quickly wreak vengeance on their captors. The shock they give is tremendous, and strong men have often been knocked down and paralyzed for a considerable time.

In the fresh water, particularly the marshes and sluggish streams of Brazil and Guiana, there is to be found the electric eel. This fellow is very like the common eel which is found in our own American waters as to general looks.

The difference—the presence within it of the natural electric battery—is a tremendous one, though. This, says Dr. R. W. Shufeldt in the *Scientific American*, consists of two pairs of peculiarly constituted bodies, passing between the skin and the muscles, longitudinally, in the region of the tail—one pair being next to the back, and the other along the anal fin. Upward of 250 cells make up the structure of one of these organs, and they receive a very generous nerve supply.

Now, when one comes to know that an eel of this species may attain a length of fully six feet and possesses the power of voluntarily giving a shock with its battery at any instant, it will at once be appreciated what a truly formidable creature this fish really is.

Moreover, it having a smooth, finless back, the body for its entire length being of a dull brownish color above, it becomes quite difficult to see it in the water where it lies, especially if the latter be stirred up and made muddy. It is then that this most powerful of all electrical fishes becomes the most dangerous both to man and beast.

Examination of one of these electrical organs has shown that in action it is very much like a galvanic positive, the posterior negative, and the current only discharged at the point of contact with an object. This has been proved to be so powerful when complete that chemical compounds are decomposed by it and steel needles magnetized.



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Hold the drum in one hand and with the thumb of the other resting against the side of the drum manipulate the drumstick with the fingers of the same hand (as indicated in the cut). With practice it is possible to attain as great skill as with a real drum. The movable sounding board can be adjusted for either heavy or light playing. They are used extensively in schools for marching. Price 16c. each, delivered free.

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The transmitter in this telephone is made from the best imported parchment; with ordinary use will last a long time; can be made in any length by adding cord; the only real telephone for the money; each one put up in a neat box; fully illustrated, with full directions how to use them. Price 12c., postpaid.

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Here is an innocent, and very laughable, practical joke. It consists of a card, postal size, blackened on one side, except a white circle in the center. On the other is an interesting sentence, printed in spiral form, so that one has to keep turning the card around and around in order to read it. The turning of the card causes the dark side to darken the reader's fingers.

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WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 28th St., N. Y.



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Those in the joke may freely smell the perfume in the bottle, but the uninitiated, on removing the cork will receive the contents in his hands. This is a simple and clever joke. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.

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A new and interesting game. It consists of a 9 1/4 inch wooden racquet, with a cup near the end, to which a bell is fastened by a 14-inch string. The object is to toss the bell and see how often it can be brought back into the cup.

Price, 12c. each, postpaid.

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**THE SPOTTER, OR THE EDUCATED DIE.**—The performer exhibits a die. The Ace of Spades and five cards are now taken from a pack. The Ace of Spades is thoroughly shuffled with the other cards, which are then placed face down in a row on the table. The die is now thrown, and as if embodied with superhuman intelligence, the exact position of the Ace is indicated. Without touching the die, the performer picks up the cards, gives them a complete shuffle and again spreads them out. The die is rolled as before by any person, and is seen to come to a stop with the locating number uppermost. The card is turned over and found to correspond in position. Price, 15c.

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The funniest thing out! You place them in a plate, and they suddenly hop up into the air with the most astonishing agility. These queer little fellows are guaranteed to mystify the smartest professor by their mysterious actions. Nobody can account for their funny movements. More fun than a circus! Get a few and watch their strange jumps. Price, 5c. each, or 6 for 25c. by mail.

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#### CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

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#### THE PRINCESS OF YOGI CARD TRICK.

Four cards are held in the form of a fan and a spectator is requested to mentally select one of the four. The cards are now shuffled and one is openly taken away and placed in his pocket. The performer remarks that he has taken the card mentally selected by the spectator. The three cards are now displayed and the selected card is found to be missing. Reaching in his pocket the performer removes and exhibits the chosen card. Price, 15c.

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**JUMPING CARD.**—A pretty little trick, easy to perform. A card is placed in the deck and jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

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**THE DEVIL'S CARD TRICK.**—From three cards held in the hand anyone is asked to mentally select one. All three cards are placed in a hat and the performer removes first the two that the audience did not select and passing the hat to them their card has mysteriously vanished. A great climax; highly recommended. Price, 10c.

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**APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.**—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do. Price, 35c.

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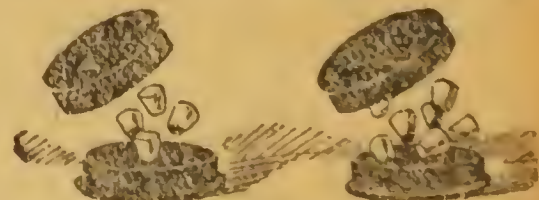
—The performer exhibits an ordinary pencil and shows it top and bottom. The pencil is laid on the palm, the performer calling attention to his hypnotic power over innate objects. The pencil is seen slowly to rise, following the movements of the other hand. The witnesses are asked to pass their hand around it to assure themselves no thread or hair is used. Price, 25c.

J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.



**"KNOCK-OUT" CARD TRICK.**—Five cards are shown, front and back, and there are no two cards alike. You place some of them in a handkerchief and ask any person to hold them by the corners in full view of the audience. You now take the remaining cards and request anyone to name any card shown. This done, you repeat the name of the card and state that you will cause it to invisibly leave your hand and pass into the handkerchief, where it will be found among the other cards. At the word "Go!" you show that the chosen card has vanished, leaving absolutely only two cards. The handkerchief is unfolded by any person, and in it is found the identical card. Price, 10c.

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**THE MULTIPLYING CORKS.**—A small round box is shown to be empty and one of the spectators is allowed to make three corks in it. The cover is put on and the box is handed to one of the spectators who, upon removing the cover, finds six corks in the box. Three of the corks are now made to vanish as mysteriously as they came. Very surprising. Price, 10c.

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# "Secret Service"

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 23, 1912.

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## ITEMS WORTH READING

To win a wager, Melvin G. Huey, a farmer living near South Ben., Ind., has succeeded in producing an ear of corn containing kernels of red, white and blue.

Although the course of the Thames winds and curves through an actual distance of 220 miles, the mouth is only about a hundred miles from the source as the crow flies.

All German soldiers must learn to swim. Some of them are so expert that, with their clothing on their heads and carrying guns and ammunition, they can swim rivers several hundred yards in width.

Austrian farmers have taken to breeding opossums for their fur, by way of utilizing timbered sections of their land which have little value otherwise. It has been found that these animals can be bred to produce white, gray, brown or black fur.

To protect himself from loss of time caused by callers who are a long while in coming to the point, a Paris business man has had put on his office table a card bearing the words: "Be so good as to abstain from speaking of my health, or the weather or of the market quotations, three subjects with which I am perfectly well acquainted. Start at once on the matter that brings you here."

Since the opening, eleven years ago, of the railway from Giardini to Catania, on the island of Sicily, Mt. Etna has been the most accessible of volcanoes. This miniature line makes a complete circuit of the mountain, rising at one point to 3,810 feet above the sea level, and those traveling in the first-class compartment, which is fitted with glass sides, are able to enjoy the scenery in perfect comfort.

Chinese soldiers get more glory than money out of their occupation. The army consists of 650,000 men, the privates in which are paid about one dollar a month, and out of this meagre income they must feed themselves. Three dollars a month are paid to the cavalry, and they are required to feed themselves as well as their horses. When a horse is lost or killed, the cavalryman supplies a new one at his own expense.

In these days of impure drinking water, water famines and filtered water it is well to know that one of the great advantages of fruit is that it offers us pure water, for which we do not need a filter, to the amount of nearly 50 per cent. in berries and 92 per cent. in watermelons. Oranges and lemons are not only valuable by reason of their potash salts, but especially for the citric acid. A case of paralysis of the entire right side is reported, where the juice of oranges, adopted as a regular diet, with chicken broth, appeared to do much. As an aid to digestion—a really material aid—the pineapple stands alone among the fruit. Its vegetable pepsin neutralizes—or, perhaps, rather digests—albuminous substances in the stomach. Fresh pineapple—or, better still, the fresh juice of one—placed in direct contact with eggs or gelatine or milk, will prove the fact conclusively by producing a better tasting dish. In cases of catarrhal ailments of the throat and in its downward connection the alimentary canal or tract pineapple cannot be overestimated, and it acts with equal force in malarial affections. As for the date and the banana, they contain sufficient nutriment to sustain life. The salts and organic acids in the apple tend to improve the quality of the blood.

## WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS

Bunk—I know a dog that's worth \$15,000. Fedinek—How could a dog save so much?

"Take my advice and mind your own affairs. No man ever got rich fighting other people's battles." "I don't know. How about a lawyer?"

Sam—you're quite a traveller, Frank. Have you ever been to the Holy City? Frank—I should say so—I spent a whole Sunday in Philadelphia.

"Hello, son, what's your name?" "Same as me father's." "But what's his name?" "Same as me own." "I mean what do they call you when breakfast is ready?" "Slow-poke."

Frank—Sam, when you an' me was out at de party las' night you acted awful strange. Sam—I didn't know it, Frank. How did I act strange? Frank—Why, you was actually spendin' money!

She was extremely bashful when she entered the florist's shop. "I—I'd like to get some flowers for a young man's birthday party," she said, blushing a cherry red. "Yes, miss," replied the polite florist, with a low bow. "How would sweet williams do?"

There was company at tea, and little Algernon felt that it was an occasion upon which he might assert himself. "Ma," he remarked, holding up his bread and butter in scorn, "can't I have some jam on this?" "What?" ejaculated his economical mother, "jam on butter? No, indeed; certainly not!" "Oh, I don't care about it being on the butter," said Algy, calmly; "put it on the other side!"



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